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ABSTRACT

A program was developed to create a positive school climate in a multiethnic school to reduce conflict among students. The targeted population consisted of students in kindergarten through grade six in a school in a low socioeconomic environment in a rural community in northern Illinois. The majority of the school's 309 students were White, but 29.4% were Mexican American, 0.6% were Asian, and 0.3% were African American. Problems of poor peer interaction and negative school climate were documented through a study of discipline referrals, parent, teacher, and student surveys, and teacher checklists. Review of this data about probable causes indicated that students have inadequately developed social skills, and that the amount of parental involvement, the socioeconomic status of the population, and the number of troubled families might be contributing to the problem. An underlying factor might have been the response of the school to the demographic changes that have resulted in a culturally diverse population in the area. Intervention was planned to create a positive social environment through community service projects, implement a program of social skills development through cooperative learning, and create a schoolwide program to increase unity, improve student relations, and raise multicultural awareness. After the interventions, students showed improved behavior, and appeared to have gained cultural awareness and an understanding of other ethnic traditions and values. The intervention appears to have improved the school's negative climate. Thirty-two appendixes contain the study instruments and research tools. (Contains 4 tables, 25 figures, and 41 references.) (SLD)

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ED 402 381

INCREASING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MEXICAN-AMERICANS AND WHITES IN A MULTIETHNIC SCHOOL

by

Mariann Berg-Tilton
Debby DePauw
Dede Herrmann

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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Abstract

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Date: July 21, 1995

Title: Improving School Climate to Reduce Student Conflict

This report describes a program for creating a positive school climate in order to reduce student to student conflict. The targeted population consists of kindergarten through sixth grade students in a low social economic setting, located in northern Illinois. The problems of poor peer interaction and negative school climate will be documented through discipline referrals, parent, teacher, and student surveys, and teacher checklist.

Analysis of probable cause data reveals that students have inadequately developed social skills. The amount of parent involvement, The socio-economic status of the population and the number of troubled families may be contributing factors to the problem. The schools response to demographic changes leading to a culturally diverse population may be an underlying factor.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, has resulted in the selection of three major categories of intervention: a plan to create a positive school climate for grades kindergarten through sixth; the implementation of a program of social skills development; and the creation of a school wide program to increase unity, improve student relations, and raise multicultural awareness.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

Students at the targeted elementary school are ethnically divided resulting in a negative school climate. Evidence for the existence of this problem includes teacher observation, surveys, interviews, behavior incidents, absentee rate, and student-to-student conflict.

Immediate Problem Context

The total student population at the targeted school is 309 students. The majority of these students are white. There is a 29.4 percent Mexican-American population, 0.6 percent Asian population, and 0.3 percent African-American. Students who have been found to be eligible for bilingual education with limited English proficiency constitute nine percent of the population.

Thirty percent of the student population are low income students from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced price lunches.

A perfect attendance rate of 100 percent means that all students attended school every day. The student mobility rate is based on the number of students who enroll in or leave a school during a school year. Chronic truants are students who are absent from school without a valid cause for ten percent or more of the last 180 school days. The attendance rate at the targeted school is 96.6 percent. The student mobility rate is 13.9 percent. The chronic truancy rate is 0.7 percent with a total of two chronic truants.

The average years of experience of teachers at the targeted school is 18.6 years. Teachers holding a bachelor's degree constitute 71.4 percent of the teaching staff. Teachers with master's degree and above constitute 28.5 percent of the teaching staff. Special area teachers, defined as those teachers that give support to staff and children at the targeted school have an average of 16 years of experience. Special area teachers holding a bachelor's degree comprise 42.8 percent of the specialized staff. Those holding a master's degree constitute 50 percent of the specialized staff. Seven percent of the specialized staff hold an associate's degree. The administrator at the targeted school has 16.1 years of experience with a master's degree. Teachers of Mexican-American background constitute nine percent of the teaching staff at the targeted school.

The targeted school facility is 86 years old. The building consists of 14 classrooms: one kindergarten, one transitional first grade, and two classrooms of each grade level first through sixth. The special area rooms include resource, chapter one reading, chapter one math, speech, reading recovery, bilingual, gymnasium, and administrative office. The cafeteria consists of two rooms, one of which is utilized as the art room. The school counselor and music teacher share an office. The library is a detached portable building.

The instructional setting at the targeted school is composed of the following core subjects: reading, with an emphasis in whole language, mathematics, science, social studies, English, and spelling. Time devoted to the teaching of the core subjects is the average number of minutes of instruction per five day school week in each subject area divided by five. Reading includes all language arts courses. Children at the targeted school receive 60 minutes of math instruction per day, 40 minutes of science instruction per day, and 163 minutes per day of reading instruction. The time devoted to social studies instruction is 40 minutes per day. Students receive an average of 120 minutes per week of fine arts including music, physical education, and art. The bilingual program is staffed by one teacher and one teacher's aide servicing 39 students and following the state

requirements for Inclusion. The program services children of multi-age and multi-grade levels.

The average class size at the targeted school is 19.7 students per grade level as reported on the first day of school in May. (Rochelle Elementary School District, 1994). One third of the students in each regular classroom at the targeted school are Mexican-American.

The Surrounding Community

The targeted school lies within a rural community setting consisting of 8,898 people. The majority of the population is white. People with Mexican-American origin comprise 7.9 percent of the total population. The remaining 5.7 percent of the population is of other races. (Equifax Marketing Decision Systems, 1990).

The median family income in this community is $29,770. The per capita income for 1990 was $12,107. (Equifax, 1990). People in the community who are below the poverty level comprise 10.3 percent. Forty five percent of the households are headed by a female.

The median housing cost in the targeted community is $56,800. People living in a single home dwelling comprise 68 percent of the total population. Twenty nine percent of the population inhabit multi unit dwellings. The remaining population, 4 percent, live in a mobile home or trailer park. (Equifax, 1990).

The majority of the population of the targeted community is comprised of blue-collar workers. There are 12 factories which employ a large number of residents. White collar workers consists of those that work in the medical field, lawyers, teachers and local business people. The community has a total of 14 churches. The majority of the churches are Protestant with the remaining being Catholic and Jehovah Witness.

The targeted community has continuous problems with gang activity. There are two gangs; one representing primarily Mexican-American background while the other

represents mainly Caucasian. The high school dropout rate of students associated with gangs in this community is 80 percent. (M. Swanson, personal communication, April 17, 1995).

The community's school district enrollment is 1760 students. There are four buildings servicing kindergarten through sixth grade students and one junior high school that services seventh and eighth grade students. The majority of the students are white, 15 percent are Mexican-American, and 0.13 percent are composed of other races. (Rochelle, 1994). The percentage of low income students in this district is 19.4 percent. Limited English proficient students are those who have been found to be eligible for bilingual education and comprise 2.5 percent of the students in the district.

The average years of experience of teachers and administrators in the targeted district is 16 years. Fifty six percent of the teachers hold bachelor's degrees and 44 percent hold a master's degree and above. The pupil-teacher ratio of the targeted district is 18.4 students per teacher. The pupil-administrator ratio is 293 students per administrator. (Rochelle, 1994).

The average teacher and administrator salaries are based on full time equivalents. In addition to salaries, teachers receive various monetary benefits and compensation such as tax-sheltered annuities, retirement benefits, bonus and extracurricular duty payments. The average teacher salary in this district is $34,026. The average administrator salary is $54,316. The operating expenditure per pupil is $3,869. The total district expenditure is $6,503,784. (Rochelle, 1994).

The targeted community supports the schools by providing many annual events. The Civic Center sponsors a science fair and art show for all students within the district. The Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with local merchants, sponsors a Christmas tree decorating contest. The Chamber has established the Community Action Network which enables students to actively engage in community activities. The local service clubs

sponsor Needy Children's' Christmas Walk which provides children with clothing and toys. Local merchants provide an opportunity for the students to participate in an advertising contest. A local restaurant supports a reading program for students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. The local park district sponsors a municipal band consisting of students and community members. The police department sponsors a drug prevention program for all sixth grade students within the district.

Regional and National Context of Problem

Preparing students for a culturally diverse society is one of the most challenging endeavors in education today. In our nations schools, there is a growing conflict between races and cultures. It affects not only the schools, but the community as well. These negative feelings create violence in our schools. One can theorize why violence is so plentiful in our schools: social injustice, economics, and basic need for belonging are causative factors.

Youth violence has accelerated in recent years due to the accessibility of weapons. The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms reports that 2,892 juveniles were arrested for murder and more than 46,000 were arrested on weapon charges. (Bodine & Crawford, 1995). Hostility and tension, related to racial and cultural differences, create barriers and ethnically divide the children in our schools. According to Howard (1993), denial, hostility, and fear are literally emotions that kill. Our country - indeed, the world - has suffered endless violence and bloodshed over issues of racial and cultural differences.

The population of American schools is becoming more diverse. There is an influx of immigrants into this country. Nowhere is it more apparent than in our schools. The white majority is slowly becoming a minority. By the year 2020, nearly half, 45.5 percent of the nations school-age children will be children of color. (McGee Banks, 1993).

Diversity is a fact of life in every classroom. Our classrooms are diverse in ethnic terms as well as backgrounds, learning styles, special needs, and economic levels. Even young children are aware of differences. They become afraid or suspicious of people who are different if the environment they are in does not acknowledge and appreciate diversity, yet, too much emphasis on differences divides children. (Kreidler, 1995).

For many of these children it is a difficult task to carve out a place in the white Anglo-Saxon world. They are often told to forget their ethnic culture. They are now members of the White America and must learn English and the American way. Research shows that by the age four, African-American, White, and Mexican-American children are aware of racial difference and show racial preferences favoring Whites. (Banks, 1993). They are caught in a web of confusion. Are they Mexican, Mexican-American, or American? We have created "wannabe" phenomenon of Mexican-Americans trying to create their own place in the community. Therefore, we have the development of gangs in which they can establish their own identity, rules, and culture. These gangs cause negative feelings which divide the students in schools and in the entire community.

Significant demographic changes have taken place in the United States in the last ten years. The population of the United States is rapidly becoming increasingly multiracial. We will see an increase in the number of people of color filling the classrooms and entering the work force, due to the relatively high birth rate of minority Americans. (Hu-DeHart, 1993). By the year 2000, only 15 percent of the nations work force will be white native-born males, compared to 47 percent in 1987. Many of these workers will not be prepared to take their place in the work force because they lack the necessary skills. To ensure student success in schools and in their future careers, the schools must restructure to create equity between themselves and the community. Children have a better chance of succeeding in school when there is such a congruence. (McGee Banks, 1993).

Surveys show that children overwhelmingly prefer to be in a classroom that is caring and cooperative, where they are safe physically and emotionally. We must create a peaceable classroom, a community based on cooperation, communication, emotional expression, appreciation for diversity, and non-violent conflict resolution. (Kreidler, 1994).

In the 1994 report of School Safety, William DeJong, a lecturer at the Harvard School of Public Health stated, "The best school-based violence prevention programs seek to do more than reach the individual child. They instead try to change the total school environment, to create a safe community that lives by a credo of non-violence in multicultural appreciation." (Bodine & Crawford 1995).

We can conclude that in order for this to happen, there must be a bond between students, schools and community. Multicultural education can help unify a deeply divided nation rather than divide a highly cohesive one. There is much to be gained for everyone when exposed to different cultures. If we are to become a community of many cultures, then we must begin in the heart of the community; the school.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of inappropriate school behavior and negative school climate, data from anecdotal records consisting of discipline referrals; parent, teacher and student surveys; and an observation checklist were compiled.

Over the nine month period preceding the current school year, discipline incidents were recorded at the targeted school. A discipline record form was developed by the researchers (Appendix A) to aid in the recording process. A summary of the number of incidents and their behavior categories is presented in table one.

Table 1

Number and Categories of Discipline Referrals

Sept. 1, 1994 through May 31, 1995

Behavior	Number of Incidents
Swearing	20
Physical Fighting	33
Disrespect to Authority	41
Bus Infractions	46
Total	**140**

Of the 140 incidents reported one-third dealt with school bus problems, either with other students on the bus or with the bus driver. Twenty-four percent of the behavior referrals involved physical aggression. Sixty-one percent of the referrals dealt with disrespect to persons in authority or inappropriate use of language.

Data were collected from teacher survey (Appendix B) to determine what teachers observed about multicultural interactions, and teacher's knowledge and awareness of the topic. A summary of the results is presented in figures one through five.

Teacher Survey
August 31, 1995

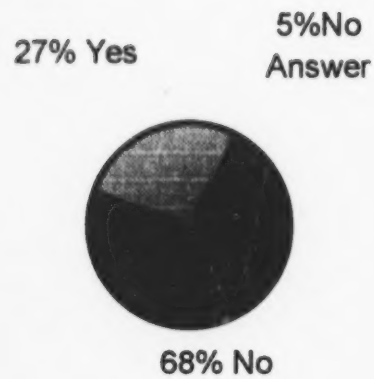


Figure 1

Cultural Conflict Between
Mexican-American & Whites

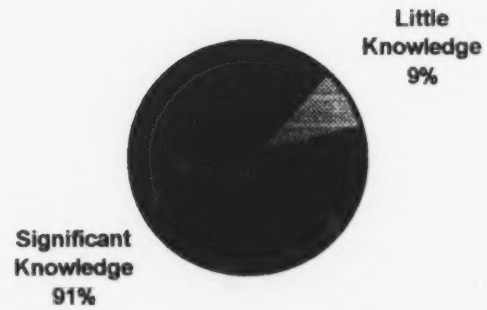


Figure 2

Knowledge of Mexican-American Culture

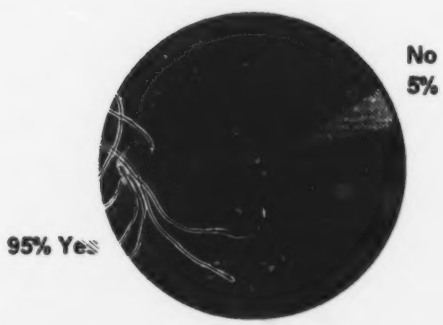


Figure 3

Teachers willing to Participate

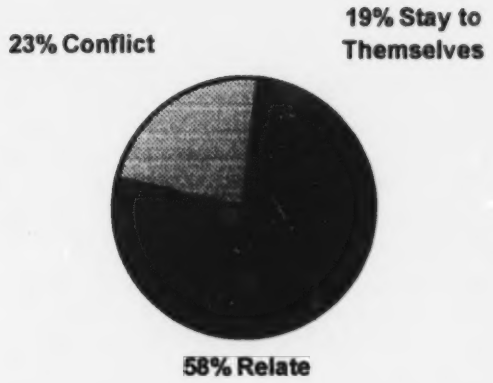


Figure 4

Mexican-American and White Relate to One Another

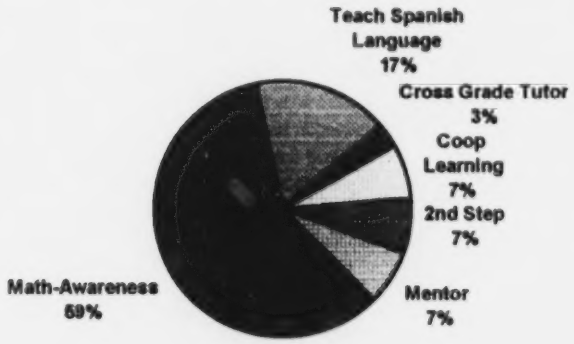


Figure 5

Ideas that would promote unity

Of the 30 teachers surveyed, sixty-eight percent see no cultural conflict between Mexican-American and Whites. (Figure 1) Over half of the teachers feel the two cultures relate well to each other. (Figure 4) Ninety-one percent believe they have little

knowledge of the Mexican-American culture. (Figure 2) A further analysis of the responses indicated 95 percent of the teachers were willing to participate in activities that would enhance a positive school climate between the Mexican-Americans and Whites. (Figure 3) Nearly one-third noticed a conflict between Mexican-Americans and Whites in the classroom, hallways, or on the playground. (Figure 4) Many activities were mentioned to promote unity in the school. Sixty percent indicated that multicultural awareness would improve the school climate. (Figure 5)

Figures six through ten present findings from a parent survey (Appendix C and D) concerning cultural unity within the school and parent participation in school activities. In addition, respondents volunteered suggestions for activities they felt would increase cultural and ethnic awareness.

Parent Survey
September 6, 1995

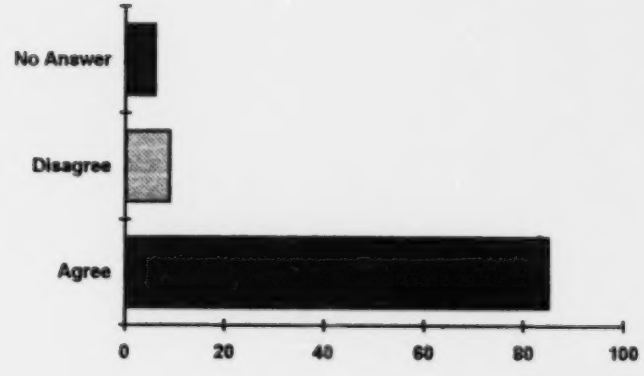


Figure 6

Students have been treated fairly

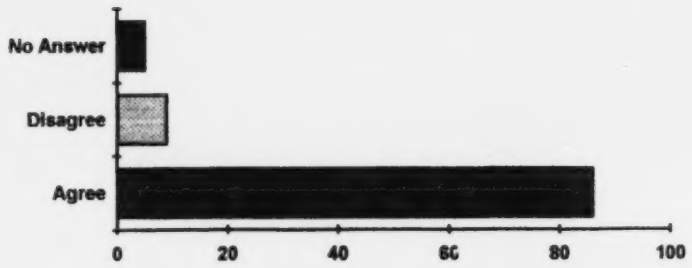


Figure 7

Provides for Cultural Differences

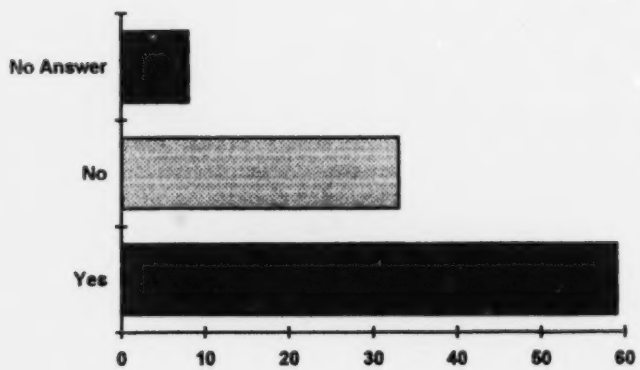


Figure 8

Willing to Participate in Multicultural Activities

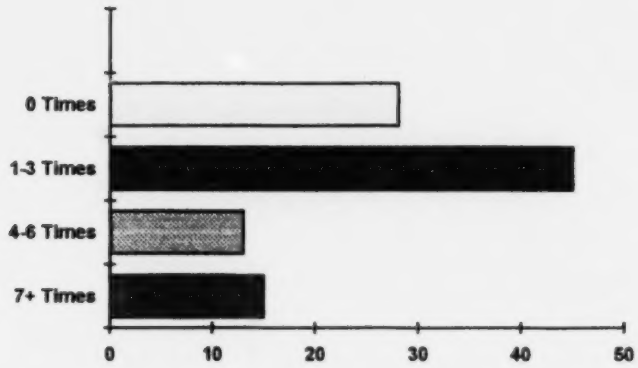


Figure 9

Participated in Child's School Activities

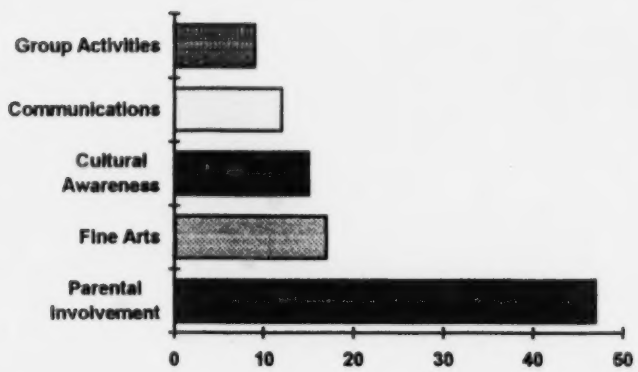


Figure 10

Parental Suggestions of Activities to Unify the School

Of the 320 surveys administered 196 parents responded. An analysis indicated 86 percent perceived the school is providing for cultural differences. (Figure 7) During the 1994-1995 school year 27 percent of the parents did not participate in their childs" school activities. Thirty percent participated four to seven plus times. (Figure 9) The parental

suggestions for unifying the school indicated that 59 percent believed increased parental involvement and open communication would strengthen school community. A small percentage, in contrast to the teachers surveyed, indicated that an increase in cultural awareness and knowledge would build a more unified school. (Figure 10) A further investigation revealed 85 percent of parents agreed that students are being treated fairly by faculty as well as their peers. (Figure 6) Fifty-nine percent of the parents were willing to participate in a variety of multicultural activities. (Figure 8)

Two-hundred-thirty-two students were polled concerning attitudes towards cultural differences, a sense of belonging, and existing discrimination. Figures 11 through 16 provide details and findings of the student survey. (Appendix E)

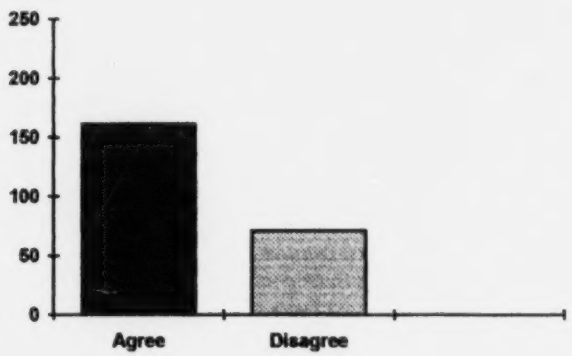


Figure 11

Students Feel Mexican-American and Whites Get Along

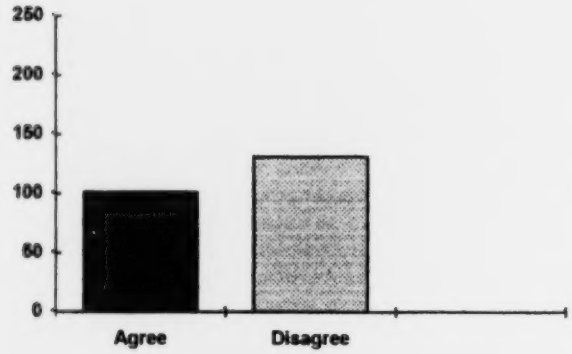


Figure 12

Students Feel Like an Outsider Around Culturally Different Students

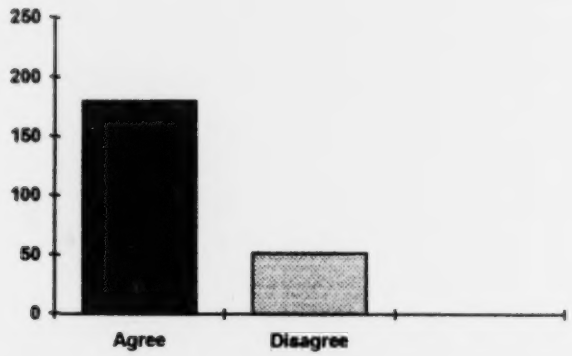


Figure 13

Students Feel it is Important to Learn About Different Cultures

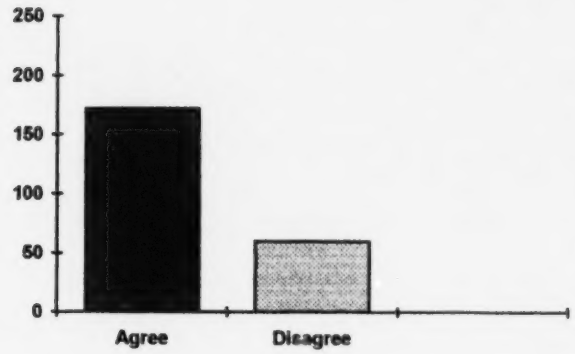


Figure 14

Students Feel They Belong to School

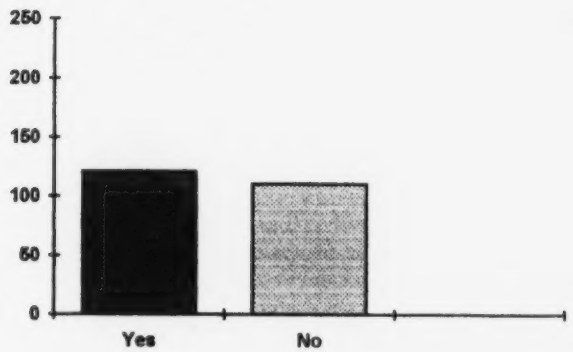


Figure 15

Students Have Seen Discrimination

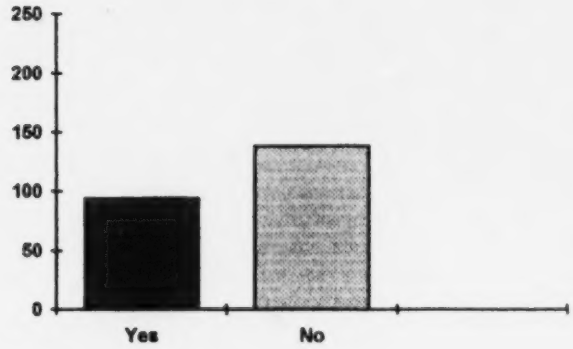


Figure 16

Students Have Felt Discrimination

Thirty-one percent of the students surveyed indicated that Mexican-Americans and Whites at the targeted school did not get along. (Figure 11) A further analysis noted 44 percent felt like outsiders when interacting with culturally different students. (Figure 12) In reference to the feeling of belonging to the school, a majority of the students felt they belonged. (Figure 14) Over three quarters of the students agreed it was important to learn about different cultures. (Figure 13) More than half of those surveyed had witnessed discrimination in the school setting while 41 percent had been victims of discrimination. (Figures 15 and 16)

It should be noted that although one-third of the students surveyed have felt the impact of discrimination in some way, parents and teachers are seemingly unaware of these occurrences. Several conclusions can be drawn from the data given. First, teachers and parents may be choosing to ignore discrimination, rationalizing that the degree of discrimination is not significant in their eyes. However, any degree of discrimination is harmful to the student involved and the school climate. Second, there may be a lack of communication between the Spanish speaking student and the English speaking teacher.

The Spanish speaking student may lack the skills to express himself in relations to discriminatory acts. Finally, the degree of student/teacher trust may be insufficent.

The lack of social skills contributes to disruptive behavior as shown in table two, observation checklist. (Appendix F)

Table 2

Social Skills Observation Checklist
Aug. 23, 1995 through Sept. 15, 1995

Social Skill	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
Disruptive Talking	242	204	177	167	**790**
Inattentive Listening	211	195	174	136	**716**
Out of Seat	162	145	132	114	**553**
"Put-Downs"	21	19	6	8	**54**
Total	**636**	**563**	**489**	**425**	**2113**

The behavior incident which occurred most frequently was loud/disruptive talking. The least frequent recorded social skill infraction was use of "put-downs". The majority of social skill violations were related to instruction in academic areas of the curriculum, including inattentive listening and inappropriate voices. An assumption may be made that children were using loud voices because many activities involved beginning level cooperative learning. The children had not internalized the social skills involved in group work. Another conclusion drawn from the data is that the degree of difficulty of the curricular tasks may be inappropriate for students' ability levels. Students may not understand directions possibly because teachers need to give more structured directions.

Probable Cause

An assessment of the discipline referral checklist indicates an excessive amount of bus infractions. There may be a need for more consistent and structured bus rules. The researchers propose that the bus drivers would benefit from instruction in conflict resolution and behavior management.

The disruptive and aggressive behavior may be related to the student's troubled home environment. Due to the poverty level and single-parent families dwelling in the targeted school area, many of these behaviors named in table one are learned in the home. Parents are not taking responsibility for their children's behavior or teaching them appropriate ways of interaction. Low socio-economic levels lead to unsupervised children due to the work schedules of many single parent families. Children are left unsupervised and little emphasis is placed on the value of school.

According to the teacher survey and results presented in figures 1 through 5, the vast majority of teachers feel they have little knowledge of the Mexican-American culture. Although one-third of the student population is Mexican-American, the school district has been deficient in educating its teachers in multicultural awareness. The researchers believe that if the differences in cultures and reasons behind student actions and behaviors are not understood, preconceived evaluations of the students' academic progress might be made.

Regarding teachers' willingness to participate in multicultural activities, an overwhelming majority agreed. The researchers assume that this result is related to the ease of implementation of the action plan. Teachers further commented that additional time away from the core curriculum was a concern.

Concerning the statement dealing with the targeted school providing for cultural differences, over three-fourths of the parents surveyed believed that teachers were recognizing cultural differences. In contrast, the teachers overwhelmingly implied they

know little about multicultural education. In reference to figure six on the parent survey, 85 percent of parents thought students were being treated fairly, yet over half of the students stated discrimination exists. This may result from a lack of communication between the student and parent. Nearly one-third of parents did not participate in any school activities throughout the preceding year.

Evidence presented in the form of survey results, leads to the conclusion that lack of parental involvement may be due to lack of communication between school and home. Mexican-Americans may feel that they are not welcomed in a predominately White school setting. Cultural differences may be responsible for feelings of intimidation and inferiority on the part of the Mexican-American parent.

The researchers contend that if the school implemented more multicultural activities Mexican-American parents would be more inclined to be involved. This involvement would open lines of communications and create a welcoming school climate.

Literature suggests several underlying causes for inappropriate school behavior and negative school climate. The causes were identified as follows; multicultural diversity, low economic level and troubled families, lack of parent, community and school involvement, lack of social skills and student-to-student conflict.

In the past decade there has been an explosion of cultural diversity in the schools. The result has been the formation of ethnic and minority groups creating their own towns and communities within cities, thus alienating themselves form different cultures and races. The increase of immigrants into America has created a fundamental change in the composition of the school population. According to the data collected in the 26th Annual Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll, Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 63 percent of the people surveyed believed that increased cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity among the student population was a very important cause of violence and aggressive behavior in schools. (Elam, Rose & Gallup, 1994)

Efforts to improve the quality of multicultural education require teachers to restructure their curriculum. Teachers should strive to develop a curriculum that values individuality and diversity. Banks, (1993) believes that misconceptions about theory and practice in multicultural education have led to racial and ethnic tension in schools. Lack of teacher knowledge in multicultural education and resistance to include it in the curriculum, denies all children a quality education. Banks summarizes, "Cultural conflict occurs in the classroom because much of the personal/cultural knowledge that students from diverse cultural groups bring into the classroom, is inconsistent with the school knowledge and with the teacher's personal and cultural knowledge." (Banks, 1993, p. 26).

According to Howard (1993), as the population of the United States shifts to larger numbers of minority groups, there is a need for increased multicultural awareness. Although people strive to become more aware and sensitive to other cultures, tension still exists. Many Americans simply choose to remain unaware. The dominant groups of the population have the luxury of choosing ignorance because there is no threat to their own survival or success. The response to this is hostility and a great fear of diversity. For many minority groups, it is difficult to attempt to find a place in American society, while at the same time, trying to preserve their own ethnicity.

The results of research indicated that low socio-economic and troubled families play an important part in the development of a negative school climate and disruptive student behavior in schools. The American family today is no longer represented by the traditional two-parent, single bread-winner model of the past. Demographers at Harvard concluded in their report, The Nation's Families, 1960-1990, (Albert, 1984), that there is a new family unit in today's society, that being, single households headed by women. The report projects that the family unit will continue to grow more diverse and unstable. The latter part of the twentieth century has evolved into a fast-paced complex society and developed

unprecedented problems and stresses that previous families never encountered. The two-parent family is no longer the norm, but the exception.

Many of the children from single-parent families are unprepared for a day of school. Children arrive at school without breakfast and dressed inappropriately for the weather. Older children have assumed the responsibility of caring for younger children. The demands placed on the single-parent merely to provide for the survival of the children, leaves little time for the important job of parenting. Children are left at home unsupervised. Given the opportunity, many of the children fall in with the wrong crowd and search for new ways to belong. Often this leads to involvement with gangs. Martin (1995) contends that there is a lack of quality relationships and interactions between family members in today's society. Due to the working schedules and little time spent with children, parents are failing to create a sense of family unity.

Howe, (1991) maintains that disruptive and aggressive behavior in the schools is related to the rapid growth of poverty in society today. Howe predicts that in the year 2000, one child out of four will live in poverty. Numerous children today are plagued with lack of adequate housing, scarcity of food and lack of parental supervision. A high percentage of these children have serious health problems and little chance of receiving medical care. Howe describes poverty as "the parent of school failure, job failure, emotional imbalance, and social rejection." (p 201).

According to the results of the 27th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, (Elam, Rose & Gallup, 1995), people viewed lack of parental control and the breakdown of family life as the major cause of increased violence and disruptive behavior in schools today.

In light of the radically changing family unit and diverse population, the question is raised on the importance of parental, community, and school involvement. Can lack of parental and community involvement be considered an important contributing factor in

creating a divided school community? What, if any, effect does parental involvement in the schools have on the behavior of students?

It is the conviction of Lipstiz (1995) that in order to create a positive school environment, parents, teachers, students and the school community must form a partnership and work together. Without the involvement of the entire community in the education process, feelings of alienation and distrust will develop. Epstein (1995) agrees that families and schools must form partnerships and take responsibilities for children to create better educational opportunities. A school that ignores the important contributions of family and community will build barriers that affect the student long after the educational process is finished. Insufficient school partnerships create students that do not feel cared for and lack social skills to work cooperatively with others. Students who receive support form parents, teachers, and the community, feel valued, have a higher academic achievement and build positive attitudes towards school (Epstein, 1995).

Goodman (1995) reported that family involvement in school programs resulted in higher academic achievement. This was found to be true at all grade levels and socio-economic levels. Goodman identified family/school partnerships as an important factor in the outcome of every child's education. Data collected from a survey in Fortune found that 89 percent of the respondents perceived lack of family involvement as the biggest barriers to school reform (Goodman, 1995).

Timpane (1995) contends that schools cannot succeed without the collaboration of parents and communities. He cites the lack of participation in parent/teacher associations, demographic, societal, and economic factors as responsible for tensions between parents, schools, and community members. There is an urgent need in society to build bonds of trust and communication between families, communities and schools to strengthen education. Families need strong support from the schools and community in the form of self-help workshops to remain functional.

The research findings of The Program on Youth and Caring (Chaskin & Rauner, 1995) agree that programs and projects which create a caring environment develop caring behaviors in students. The programs cited as most highly regarded were those that suggested family membership and created a sense of belonging in the school.

The next question addressed is: "Can the teaching of social skills improve students behavior?" Cartledge and Kleefeld (1991) reported that there is a positive correlation between the teaching of social skills, academic achievement, and appropriate social behavior in a school setting. Children who do not learn social skills in the home environment find themselves in conflict with others. Social skills, such as interacting positively with others, communicating effectively, cooperating in work and play, and resolving conflicts, are critical in the development of children. In order for children to develop successful relationships with peers, teachers, and parents, it is necessary for them to learn and practice social skills. Children begin learning social skills at birth. The influence of family members and peers, as well as, the children's own attitudes and communication skills, affect their ability to interact with others appropriately. Elliot and Gresham (1991) contend that children lacking interpersonal social skills experience negative child-adult and child-to- child relationships. Elliot and Gresham urged that the teaching of social skills be used as an important tool to improve interactions between parents, teachers, and peers. Children who are deficient in social skills are at risk for social behavior problems.

McGee-Banks (1993) discussed James Comer's social skills curriculum which is driven by the belief that what poor students need first are the social skills and positive community connections that many children take for granted.

Banks (1991) summarized," Each of us becomes culturally encapsulated during our socialization in childhood. We accept the assumptions of our own community culture, internalize its values, views of the universe, misconceptions, and stereotypes. Although

this is as true for the child socialized within a mainstream culture as it is for the minority child. Minority children are usually forced to examine, confront, and question their cultural assumptions when they enter school." (p. 34)

Violence in the nation's schools is on the rise. Eleven percent of all crimes occur in the nation's 85,000 public schools (Illinois ASCD, 1995). Education is faced with the problems of drug abuse, gangs and violence in many of the schools. Aggressive behavior results when a person has not learned internal means of control. Literature suggests that much of the aggressive behavior present in schools today is learned behavior. Factors which influence aggressive behavior are: poor role modeling, poverty, disintegrating home environments, child abuse, peer pressure, and violence in the media (Lindquist & Molnar, 1994).

An alarming factor, reported by Sautter (1995), is that children are displaying violent behavior at an earlier age. Many of the children involved are third-generation violent offenders; they have grown up in violent families. In 1992, 2,829 children under the age of 18 were arrested for murder.

In conclusion, the causes of a diverse school climate are:

1. Lack of social skill instruction
2. Poverty
3. Poor role modeling
4. Change in the structure of the family unit
5. Peer pressure
6. Lack of unification of parents, teachers, students, and community members

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

A variety of solutions have been put forth to deal with student behavior and an inappropriate school climate. In an effort to address the needs of a diverse population, peoples' culture needs to be taken into account. According to Dean, Sanlend, & Taylor (1993), a successful multicultural education should include learning activities that aid students in accepting and appreciating differences in culture, language, and color. A specific curriculum to identify and acknowledge cultural diversity includes activities to teach students sensitivity, critical thinking skills, and peer interaction. Suggested guidelines to help overcome misconceptions of other cultures are: student comparison and recognition of cultural differences among groups, the inclusion of cultural activities as an ongoing part of learning throughout the year, and the teaching of different individual behaviors within cultures.

Gay (1993) believed that teachers need to be sensitive to different cultural systems and establish a knowledge base about different cultures. Doing so will create a culturally affirming and caring environment. According to Pang (1994), teachers begin this process by investigating their own values and goals to better understand others. Pang contends that teachers should actively participate in a culturally diverse community to rethink misconceptions and effectively connect the students' lives to school curriculum.

Ross (1995) maintained that teachers must first examine take their own assumptions about different cultures. Determining any bias that may exist and noticing when personal judgments interfere is a crucial step in discovering what teachers convey to students through their own behavior. Ross further suggested classroom discussions and self-

analysis through the use of surveys. The use of thoughtful questioning reveals ways of improving the school and makes the students active participants in changing the school climate. Using student surveys begins the dialogue between students and teachers, allowing for honest ideas and considerations for change. Involving students in the follow-up efforts to improve the current conditions improved school and community relations. (Hawkins, 1993)

A dimension of multicultural education called "prejudice reduction", is based on children's attitudes concerning cultures and prescribes approaches to promote better ethnic attitudes. In conjunction with prejudice reduction, Banks (1993) advised using realistic images of different ethnic groups and involving students in cooperative learning activities. It was suggested that cooperative groups be composed of students from different cultural backgrounds in order to develop more positive opinions of diverse cultures. Banks further suggested schools use assessment techniques that are equitable to all cultures, eliminate tracking, and make educators accountable for fostering a sense of empowerment for a diverse student population.

The instructional strategies, as described by Knapp (1995), emphasize the importance of connecting children's culture and diverse background to make learning more meaningful. Teachers attempted to include the different backgrounds of the children in the curriculum and as a result found that children made greater gains in academics because they were linking their learning experience to prior background knowledge. To connect instruction more closely to the children's home environment and culture, Knapp suggested having supplemental instructional programs as a resource for classroom teachers.

Reissman (1994) encouraged students to examine their own experiences and traditions and develop a commonality. A strategy suggested was using multicultural literature to create cultural awareness. This entailed omitting any cultural references within the literature and allowing students to recognize the character's culture. This activity

encouraged students to draw upon their own experiences and compare what they have in common with people from other cultures.

As the local cultural diversity of a school changes, a need is created for a curriculum that explores the heritage of the students. Specific measures, as described by Martin (1995), urged that all children be educated in various cultural heritage. Parents and teachers were encouraged to form partnerships in educating children. Martin further suggested the importance of hands-on activities and projects where children become active participants to experience other cultures. Martin believed that schools that teach multicultural awareness are teaching children to become active, cooperative participants in the future work place. Through understanding and knowledge of other cultures, children learn to live and work together.

Stone (1995) advised the collaboration of on-site professionals with parents and community resources to address the varying economic levels within a school district. Significant efforts to initiate a task force of professionals to assess the needs of low income families in a holistic manner were promoted. Interviews and surveys with parents and students, provide insight to family problems and needs. Questionnaires identified the emotional, health related, and material needs of family members. The implementation of such a program created a bridge between home and school, building trust and creating an open atmosphere where parents felt unthreatened. Stone believed nurses and counselors provide an important support system dealing with child care and helping children cope with family tragedies. Stone further suggested workshops conducted by school staff or community organizations. Examples of parent workshop topics included: parent effectiveness training, child discipline strategies, child development instruction, chemical abuse prevention, and health and wellness training. Questionnaires and surveys were used to determine a need and supply basic necessities such as blankets and food. Stone found

that a breakfast program could be developed for low income students which would meet the needs indicated by families on the questionnaire.

Martin (1995) cited a lack of quality relationships and interactions between parents and children of troubled families. Martin further encourages school staff and community resources to provide a moral equivalent of home for students. "Of course, a school-home will teach the three R's. But it will give equal emphasis to the three C's of care, concern, and connection - not by designating formal courses in these fundamentals but by being a domestic environment characterized by safety, security, nurturance, and love." (p. 357)

Epstein (1995) outlined several strategies for troubled families. These included: workshops and videotapes on child rearing at each age and grade level; parent education or training for parents on family literacy; family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services; and home visits to discuss family problems.

What do successful parent/school partnership programs look like and how can they be effectively designed and implemented by the school? Throughout the literature review, a common thread linked all solutions to creating an appropriate school environment, which induces acceptable student behavior through parent, student, and community collaboration. Results of research showed that when parents and the school community were actively involved in the education of children, student achievement improved and a sense of belonging was created (Hamilton, 1994). The United States Secretary of Education reinforced the importance of parent and community involvement in a letter to parents which encouraged efforts to work together in order to create a strong link between family members, community leaders, business leaders, and educators. Riley (1990) believed that all parents, regardless of their income, can make a meaningful contribution to their child's education and have the responsibility to do so.

Many parents can involve themselves in the education of their children through volunteer activities, yet fail to do so. Hamilton (1994) suggested that schools lacking in

parental involvement should look at their actions to determine if they are unintentionally creating barriers. Hamilton further suggested examining school practices for four potential barriers: physical barriers, social barriers, emotional barriers, and communication barriers. Physical barriers include time management, transportation, and child care services. Social barriers that need to be examined include changing household composition and cultural differences. Parents' past experiences with school, academic difficulty, social rejection, and intimidation by teachers are examples of emotional barriers to be considered. Communication barriers can contribute to lack of parental involvement by creating an environment that fails to convey a friendly atmosphere. Teachers and school personnel are encouraged to present themselves in a friendly manner . Hamilton urges sending home letters in the home language of the student. A parental involvement program developed by Stone (1995) stressed providing multilingual personnel. Translators were an important part of all school meetings and conferences. Translators were used to help organize after school projects, which included a weekly cleaning of the school grounds to help eliminate graffiti and beautify the school. As a result, a sense of belonging was created and less graffiti was evident.

To promote family involvement, Hamilton (1994) described three objectives. The first objective entailed creating a welcoming atmosphere where parents are viewed as a valued part of the educational team. This can be achieved by welcoming signs that are nonintimidating, and written communication that allows for cultural differences. Second, schools should become more family-oriented by adjusting schedules to accommodate the families, providing child care and developing a caring and compassionate attitude toward diverse families. Third, schools need to offer different levels of parental participation, and include parents from the beginning in the planning process. The teacher's role in the partnership is to encourage parental involvement and keep communication lines open.

Teachers are encouraged to form nurturing relationships with the children and make an effort to recognize the contributions of the parents by reinforcement.

Studer and Siehl (1994) agreed that teachers, parents, community, and students working together can make a difference in the education of American children. Greater gains in academics are made with the development of a caring atmosphere where children feel comfortable seeking help from adult mentors as well as peers.

Studer cited as an example, the peer teaching program in the Perkins Public School District in Sandusky, Ohio. Community resources were integrated with peer programs and teacher volunteers. The result was higher academic achievement through peer interaction and a development of social skills. Literature indicated the critical social skills of empathy, friendship, and impulse control were gained through peer interaction. This was based on the premise that peer interactions are more frequent, diverse, and intense than those with adults. Six essential strategies were designed to facilitate the peer program. These included: enhancing communication of program goals between peers, school personnel, parents and community; developing an assessment program that makes the students individually accountable; teaching specific social skills to small heterogeneous groups; and allowing adequate time to practice social skills and internalize new behaviors. Planning for the program should include school personnel, parents, and members of the community committing to the program and allowing for changing needs of the school and community.

Keller (1995) described parent and community involvement in the education process as "powerful learning". Keller outlined three principles on which to build a successful parent and community involvement program. They included: unity of purpose, empowerment with responsibility, and building on the strengths and expertise within the community. Keller further suggested the participation of the entire school on a project.

Another solution to encourage student, parent, and teacher collaboration, as stated by Clark and Heller (1993), involved the craft of quilting. Quilting allowed opportunities for children to use group problem solving, learn about differences, and appreciate individual histories. Clark found that, by including the ideas of parents and students, a spirit of togetherness was developed. The project allowed different generations and races to come together and awaken family and cultural pride. The quilts serve as visual reminders to children that their work is long-lasting and valued.

Epstein (1995), promoted creating family-like schools that welcome all types of families. A family school recognized student individuality and made each child feel special and included. To create community-minded families, services and programs need to be provided for students and parents during and after school. Specific program strategies, as described by Epstein, included active parent teacher organizations, independent groups to work for school restructuring, committees for family and community involvement, and networks to link families directly with the school.

To create a caring school community, Epstein defined six types of caring involvement. These entailed: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein promotes the development of an action team designed to implement the six types of involvement. The action team is responsible for developing a program of partnership that includes the family and community resources and creates a unified plan and program. There are five crucial steps identified to develop more positive school, family, and community connections. The first step is creating an action team composed of three teachers from different grade levels, three parents with children in different grade levels, and one administrator. The team also requires one member from the community at large. The responsibility of the action team is to assess present practices, organize new partnerships, facilitate activities, and coordinate the six types of involvement. The second step involved developing a budget and obtaining

funds for partnership programs. Step three requires the action team to research and examine the school's present practices of involving parents and discover the beliefs and desires of the teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Suggested ways of assessing the present situation were principal's breakfast, parent-teacher organizational meetings, and random phone polls or surveys for parents, teachers, and students. The information gathered should include present strengths of school and family, community partnerships, needed changes, teacher expectations, sense of community, and goals. The fourth step in the process uses the data collected from the teachers, parents and students, in order for the action team to develop a three year plan. The plan outlines a time line for reaching more families on each type of involvement. Included in the time line are activities for grade levels, the whole school community, and families. A targeted set of activities led by subcommittees is designed to improve and maintain each type of involvement with monthly projects. During step five, the action team has a celebration which highlights the action teams' progress. The purpose of the celebration is to update families, students, and community regarding the projects completed to build partnerships.

The next question is "what can be done to improve student behavior?" The Committee for Children suggested using Second Step (1992) a violence prevention program designed to reduce aggressive and impulsive behavior in children by teaching social skills in empathy, impulse control, and anger management. Children are taught to act pro-socially through modeling, practice, and reinforcement.

Empathy was viewed as a social skill set that required the children to experience, recognize, and respond to the feelings of others. Teaching empathy in the classroom created bonds of trust which fostered negotiation and reduced conflicts.

The Second Step program suggested teaching two strategies to reduce impulsive behavior: interpersonal cognitive problem solving and behavioral social skills. Both strategies utilized the techniques of role playing, modeling, reinforcement, and transfer of

training. Problem solving proved to be the base for learning targeted behavioral skills. Specific social skills became the solutions to solving problems. Anger management involved the teaching of positive self-statements, recognition of anger cues or triggers, and calming down techniques. The role of the teacher was to provide a foundation of love and acceptance and help children develop interpersonal skills that are the building blocks of social competence.

The program was piloted in a Seattle school district. Children were given pre- and post- interviews and scores were compared with children not involved in the prevention program. Results showed the program had significantly enhanced the social skills of the targeted children. Teachers reported a positive change in the classroom climate.

Belanca & Fogarty (1991) urged teachers to teach explicit social skills, thereby helping students achieve cooperative abilities in and out of the classroom. Belanca promotes the teaching of social skills as early as preschool with an emphasis on skills in the middle grades and high school. The teaching of social skills will help reduce student-to-student conflict and develop problem-solving skills. Kohn (1991) agrees that focusing on social skills that promote positive behaviors results in spending less time on discipline problems. Kohn stresses the importance of teaching social skills to develop responsibility and enhance self-esteem.

According to Belanca, there are five steps involved in teaching social skills to create a caring classroom environment:

1. Get the student's attention and introduce the social skill by an interesting hook or set.
2. Teach the social skill using a graphic organizer to generate acceptable behaviors as found in conflict resolution.
3. Practice the targeted social skill so that it becomes internalized.
4. Students and teachers observe the targeted social skill, giving feedback on positive

behaviors observed.

5. Encourage students to reflect on the targeted social skill by discussing what they have learned and what they still need to improve on.
6. Recognize and celebrate the learned social skill.
7. Transfer the social skill outside the classroom to real life situations.

Belanca stressed the importance of having the students decide which social skills are important and why they should be learned. Doing so creates a feeling of ownership.

To summarize, one of the most effective and practical ways known to help children learn new behavior is through the teaching of social skills. The various solutions presented have shown to improve inappropriate school behavior and create a more unified school environment.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

As a result of building a positive school climate during the period of September 1995 through March 1996, the targeted elementary school will show an increase in positive peer interactions as measured by a decrease in discipline referrals, parent, teacher, and student surveys, and teacher checklist.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Community service projects will be implemented.
2. Social skills will be taught in Kindergarten through second grades.
3. Activities will be created to develop a positive school climate.

As a result of multicultural awareness activities and a parental outreach program during a period of September 1995 through March 1996, the targeted elementary students will demonstrate an increase in understanding and appreciation of other cultures as measured by student and teacher surveys.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. A series of activities that foster multicultural awareness will be developed

2. A plan will be adopted and implemented to increase parental involvement in the school.

Action Plan for the Intervention

I. Climate
   A. Kindness Recognition Program
      1. Building meeting on August 21, 1995 to discuss Acts Of Kindness Program
         a. explain program
         b. nomination forms in each room
         c. class journal on acts of kindness
      2. Information letter to parents regarding program
      3. Schedule assembly for informing students of program, August 25, 1995
         a. role play acts of kindness
         b. hand out A.O.K. kid buttons (reminders to do acts of kindness)
         c. explain Mr. Leopard and A.O. K. spots
            1. students earn spots by doing acts of kindness
            2. students are nominated by other students
            3. five spots earned = A.O.K. certificate
            4. remind to carry out at home
      4. T-shirts to be made in art class
         a. inform art teacher
         b. note home to supply white T-shirt by Friday, September 8, 1995
      5. A.O.K. journals to create awareness of what kindness is
         a. each classroom will compile a journal by August 28, 1995
         b. draw or write about an act of kindness seen or experienced
         c. make cover for book
         d. return for binding
         e. put on display at multicultural open house
      6. Materials to collect.
         a. paper and paint for leopard
         b. spots
         c. certificates
         d. A.O.K. badges
         e. box for A.O.K. nominations
         f. checklist for A.O.K. spots received
         g. letter to parents
         h. A.O.K. banner for grand total of spots
         i. camera and film
         j. shoebox for each room-nominations
         k. form for journal books

B. Quilt
    1. Faculty meeting scheduled for November 6, 1995
        a. inform teachers about the kindness quilt
            1. each class gets 12"x12" square of material
            2. each teacher randomly selects a letter form the motto "Acts of Kindness"
            3. students choose a word beginning with the selected letter that expresses sensitivity and caring toward others
            4. class creates quilt square using various mediums
                a. letter must be displayed on the square
                b. chosen word must be displayed on the square
            5. squares turned in by November 22, 1995
        b. quilt assembled by research group
        c. quilt displayed in main hallway of the school
C. School pledge
    1. criteria developed by research group for a student representative
    2. students will vote on a student representative based on criteria
        a. vote on piece of paper for one student
        b. top three chosen will be voted upon to find one representative per classroom
    3. chosen representatives from each classroom will meet on October 2, 1995 after school with the research group at 3:10 p.m. in the cafeteria
    4. representatives will create school pledge
    5. pledge will be taught to all classrooms by the student representative
    6. words of the pledge will be posted in all classrooms
    7. pledge will be recited daily led by principal over loud speaker

II. Social Skills
A. Social skills will be taught in grades K-2 for 30 minutes per day beginning August 23, 1995 and continuing periodically throughout the year and in all music classes K-6 for 30 minutes per week
    1. Base groups
        a. teacher selected groups based on mixed gender, ability, cultural diversity will be formed
        b. trust building activities (see Appendix)

B. Select social skills
    1. put ups
    2. listening
    3. conflict resolution
C. Create lesson plans for each skill (see Appendix)
D. Assessment
    1. teacher made checklist

2. rubric for student self-evaluation

III. Multicultural Awareness

A. Planning Open House

1. held on March 28, 1996
2. faculty meeting held on December 5, 1995 to inform teachers about open house
    a. purpose of program to create multicultural awareness
    b. teachers sign up for country
    c. teachers develop unit on country chosen to be taught January, 1996 through March, 1996
        1. literature
        2. culture
        3. customs
        4. geographical location
        5. ethnic food
    d. multicultural art
        1. implemented by art teacher
        2. involves K-6
        3. display at open house
    e. multicultural music
        1. implemented by music teacher
        2. involves K-6
        3. songs and dances
        4. ethnic musical instruments
        5. Christmas program with multicultural emphasis

B. Implementing Open House

1. inform parents by letter in Spanish and English
2. create passports for each child
    a. photos
    b. stickers or stamp
    c. paper
3. Format
    a. customs booth
        1. passports passed out by special area teachers
        2. students and parents visit each classrooms and receive stamp on passport
        3. return filled passport and receive award
    b. art displays in gym

C. Mexican-American Literature Week

1. inform K-2 teachers of literature week at meeting on Tuesday, February 6, 1996
2. literature activities week - February, 19-23, 1996
    a. one hour per day for five days
    b. select five Mexican-American related literature pieces

1. read and discuss stories daily
2. create cross-curricular activities
3. create graphic organizers to compare/contrast cultures

c. parental involvement
    1. Mexican-American parent volunteer to read story twice during literature week
    2. introduce simple Spanish words related to literature

d. music
    1. Mexican-American music
    2. Mexican-American dances
    3. Mexican-American instruments

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, parent, teacher, and student surveys covering positive peer interaction, and multicultural appreciation will be given. In addition, a teacher checklist to assess social skill behaviors will be kept throughout the intervention. Records of discipline referrals will be charted as part of the assessment process.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to build a positive school climate and increase positive peer interactions. The implementation of a series of school-wide activities and the use of cooperative learning structures were selected to effect the desired changes.

Cooperative learning was used to teach social skills. Social skills were taught while students were in base groups. Base groups were formed according to ability, cultural diversity, and gender. The groups were established during the first week of the school year and were maintained throughout the intervention. The original plan called for daily, 30 minute lessons throughout the year. Four weeks into the intervention it was observed by the teacher/researchers that the frequency of social skill lessons was interfering with the curriculum.. Social skills were then taught to kindergarten through second grade once a week for thirty minutes throughout the intervention. In addition, the original plan stated social skills would be taught in all music classes kindergarten through sixth grade for thirty minutes per week. Four weeks into the intervention it was necessary to change the schedule due to interference with the music curriculum. The skills chosen for base group work included: put-ups, listening, using six inch voices, and in seat. Lessons plans devoted to each of these skills can be found in Appendix G, H, I, and J. Assessment of social skills was based on a teacher-made checklist that was tallied once a month during a

cooperative group lesson. Any deficiency in that social skill behavior was noted by indicating the date of occurrence. Teacher/researchers found it more efficient to document those students who were having problems. By focusing on target behaviors the teacher was able to address those specific behaviors immediately. A sample checklist can be found in Appendix F. The action plan called for a student self-evaluation rubric. A written rubric was not age appropriate for the classrooms involved, as kindergarten and first graders are unable to read at the beginning of the year. The written rubric was replaced by oral self-reflection in a whole class setting.

The kindness recognition program was introduced to the faculty during the first week of the school year. The name A. O. K. Kids, which stands for Acts of Kindness Kids was adopted as the title for the program. The teacher/researchers explained the program to faculty and support staff. "Spots for Leo the Leopard" could be earned by the students for an act of kindness. Students nominated other students for a spot by completing a form describing the act of kindness. A nomination form can be found in Appendix K. Nominations were placed in boxes in each classroom and collected weekly by the teacher/researcher. After students were recognized for five acts of kindness they received an A. O. K. certificate. A sample certificate can be found in Appendix L. A six foot tall paper Leopard named "Leo" was hung in the gymnasium to display the spots earned by students. Five months into the intervention, two Leopard cubs were added. This was necessitated by the response to the Acts of Kindness program. Teachers were informed of an A. O. K. journal to be created in each classroom. A school-wide assembly was scheduled to inform students about the program.

A letter was sent in English and Spanish to parents regarding permission for student participation in surveys (Appendix M and N). Parents, students, and teachers were surveyed concerning cultural unity and participation in school activities. Surveys in both English and Spanish can be found in Appendix B through E).

The A. O. K. school assembly was held the second week of school. Teacher/researchers and students role-played acts of kindness. An Acts of Kindness rap was taught to the student body. Each child received an A. O. K. button that was designed and made by teacher/researchers. A letter was sent home in English and Spanish with each child explaining the Acts of Kindness Kids program (Appendix O and P). The following week A. O. K. journals were compiled to create an awareness of kindness. Students were asked to draw or write about an Act of Kindness they had seen or experienced. The journals were bound and displayed in the classrooms. A sample journal can be found in Appendix Q.

Students brought white T-shirts to school the week of September 8th. Teacher/researchers designed an A. O. K. logo to by displayed on the shirts. As a school unification project, students, teachers, and support staff tie-dyed and silk screened a T-shirt during art class. One Friday per month was established as A. O. K. day. Students, faculty and support staff wore the T-shirts on this day to promote an awareness of Acts of Kindness. A newspaper photo of children and staff wearing the shirts can be found in Appendix R. A photograph of students on A. O. K. spirit day can be found in Appendix S.

A memo was sent to teachers in reference to the development of a school pledge. A student representative was chosen from each classroom to assist in writing a school pledge. Parents of the representatives were invited to attend the meeting and help compose the pledge. The school pledge was developed to increase positive peer interactions. Representatives and their parents met with teacher/researchers. Students were asked to brainstorm characteristics of a positive school environment. The pledge was written based on these ideas. A copy of the pledge was given to all students and staff (Appendix T). The pledge was posted in each classroom and taught to all students by the teacher/researchers. The original plans called for daily recitation of the pledge over the

intercom. Later, it was suggested by the principal that the pledge be recited only on A. O. K. day due to scheduling.

A quilting project was organized to encourage problem solving and develop a spirit of togetherness. Teachers were informed about the Acts of Kindness quilt at a November faculty meeting. Each class was given a 12" x 12" square of material. Teachers selected a letter from the motto "Acts of Kindness". Students brainstormed a list of words expressing sensitivity and caring. The words began with the letter that they chose. The square was designed by the students following the guidelines set by the teacher/researchers. The squares were turned in November 22, 1995. The quilt was sewn together by the teacher/researchers. The quilt was displayed in the main hallway of the school as a visual reminder to the children of school unity and Acts of Kindness. A photo of the quilt can bee seen in Appendix U.

To strengthen multicultural awareness a third and fourth grade Christmas program with a Mexican-American theme was performed for all students and parents. The program incorporated the Spanish language, costumes from the Spanish culture, and ethnic musical instruments. Seven songs were taught to the students with several containing Spanish and English words. A copy of the program can be found in Appendix V. Photographs of the performance can be found in Appendix W.

Mexican-American literature week was held in February. Activities were done in kindergarten through second grade classrooms. Literature activities and lessons were presented for one hour per day for five days. Each classroom chose a different piece of literature to accomplish the content objective. Parent volunteers read stories, discussed Mexican-American culture, and taught simple Spanish phrases. Mexican-American songs, dances, and instruments were taught to the students by the teacher/researcher. A sample lesson plan can be found in Appendix X.

To promote parental involvement and create multicultural awareness, an open house program was planned by the teacher/researchers. Teachers were informed in August about the theme "Around the World". Teachers were asked to sign up for a country and develop a unit to be taught January through March. The units were to include literature, culture, customs, geographical location, and ethnic food from the chosen country.

The original plan for the art teacher to teach multicultural art was modified. Classroom teachers suggested teaching their own multicultural art lessons to better coincide with their lesson plans. Multicultural music lessons were taught in conjunction with the countries being taught. A letter was sent to parents in both English and Spanish informing them of the impending open house (Appendix Y and Z). Preparations for the open house included creating passports for every child in the school. The passports displayed a photograph and the name of each student (Appendix AA). A customs booth was set up in the gymnasium from which the passports would be distributed. The gymnasium was decorated in a multicultural flair. Life size people representing each country were drawn and painted by the sixth grade students. These were displayed on the gymnasium walls. Teacher/researchers created a large tissue paper globe which hung above the customs booth. Photographs of the creative atmosphere can be found in Appendix BB. The open house was held on March 28, 1996. Upon arrival students entered customs to receive their passport. They began their trip around the world by traveling to each classroom/country. After the students viewed the cultural displays and tasted the international food prepared by the parents, they were asked a question pertaining to the country. The passport was then stamped with a thematic stamp. Children continued traveling to all the countries to receive a stamp. Their journey completed, they returned to customs to receive a special prize of a pencil with flags of many countries represented and a bumper sticker. Parents and children then adjourned to the cafeteria where parent

volunteers served cake and ice cream. Teacher/researchers contacted community businesses for donations of prizes to be distributed throughout the evening. Five names were drawn every fifteen minutes and winners were announced over the intercom by the school principal. The students unable to attend the open house were allowed to visit the classrooms the following day and also received a passport and a pencil.

Post surveys were given to teachers, parents, and students to measure the results of the intervention. Sample post surveys can be found in Appendix CC through FF. Parent surveys were sent in both English and Spanish.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

A documentation of student disruptive behavior was collected by the principal. Anecdotal records were kept recording the number of incidents and students involved in; swearing, physical fighting, disrespect to authority, and bus infractions.

Over the eight month implementation in the current school year, discipline incidents decreased in all areas. A summary of the number if incidents and their behavior categories is presented in table three.

Table 3

Number and Categories of Discipline Referrals

Sept. 1, 1995 through April 4, 1996

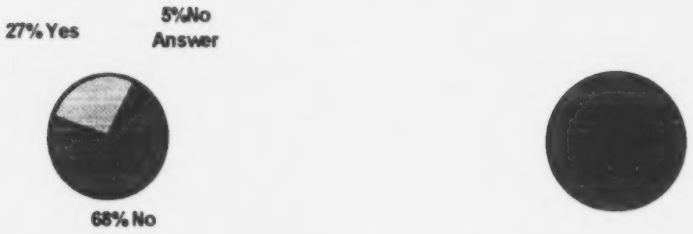
Behavior	**Number of Incidents 94-95**	**Number of Incidents 95-96**
Swearing	20	14
Physical Fighting	33	21
Disrespect to Authority	41	13
Bus Infractions	46	31
Total	**140**	**79**

Of the 79 incidents recorded during the eight month period 42 percent dealt with a break down in relations, among students or between teacher and students. Eighteen percent of the referrals were a result of swearing. The majority of behavior incidents were bus infractions. Of particular interest was the dramatic decrease in the number of referrals for disrespect to authority after the intervention.

A post survey was given to teachers to determine the affects of the intervention. Of the 20 teachers surveyed, 100 percent saw no cultural conflict between Mexican-Americans and Whites in their classroom. This denotes a 32 percent decrease. (Figure 17) Twenty-five percent of the teachers felt that they had significant knowledge of the Mexican-American culture in contrast to nine percent before the intervention. (Figure 18) In reference to teachers willing to participate in organized activities that create a positive school climate, 100 percent of the faculty who were surveyed agreed to participate. (Figure 19) This data corresponds closely to the data collected in September 1995.

Teacher Survey

April 4, 1996



August 30, 1995 April 4, 1996

Figure 17

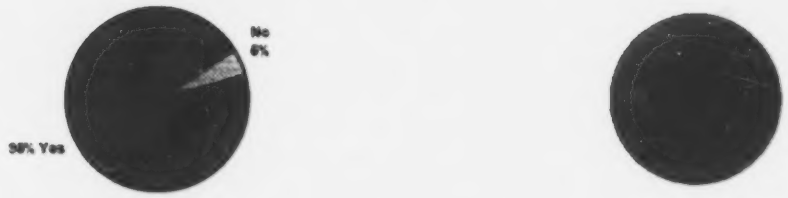
Cultural Conflict

Between Mexican-American & Whites

August 30, 1995 April 4, 1996

Figure 18

Knowledge of Mexican-American Culture



August 30, 1995 April 4, 1996

Figure 19

Teachers Willing to Participate

The majority of the teachers surveyed mentioned that Mexican-Americans and Whites relate well to each other, forming friendships and creating school unity. A further analysis of teacher responses indicate that several school activities helped to promote school unity. The activity most mentioned was the Multicultural Open House, followed by the A. O. K. program. Ten percent of the teachers cited the Christmas music program as an important activity in building school unity.

In order to measure the affects of the intervention, a post-survey was administered to the students the first week in April. Two-hundred and twenty-six students were surveyed on issues regarding race and culture. As the data in Figure 20 indicate the percentage of students that feel Mexican-American and Whites get along at the targeted school increased from 69 percent to 89 percent. The intervention appears to have had a positive effect on the unification of the students. A examination of the data divulged that 19 percent of the students felt like outsiders when interacting with culturally different students, in contrast to 44 percent before the implementation of the intervention. (Figure 21) The students opinions towards the significance of learning about other cultures remained nearly the same. An overwhelming majority agreed that it is important to gain knowledge about

different cultures. (Figure 22) In reference to the feeling of belonging to the school 90 percent of the students who participated in the post-survey agreed that they felt like they belonged. These data indicate a 15 percent increase over the eight month period. (Figure 23)

Thirty-five percent of those surveyed said they had witnessed discrimination in the school setting while more than half of those surveyed before the intervention stated they had seen discrimination in some form. (Figure 24) Forty-one percent stated they had been victims of discrimination previous to the intervention. The results of the post-survey indicated 17 percent of the students now feel that they have experienced discrimination. (Figure 25)

Student Survey

April 4, 1996

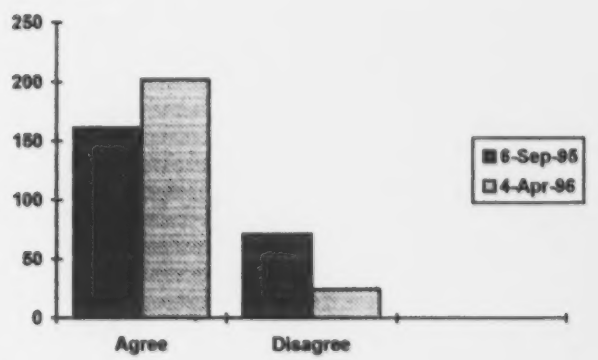


Figure 20

Students Feel Mexican-Americans Get Along

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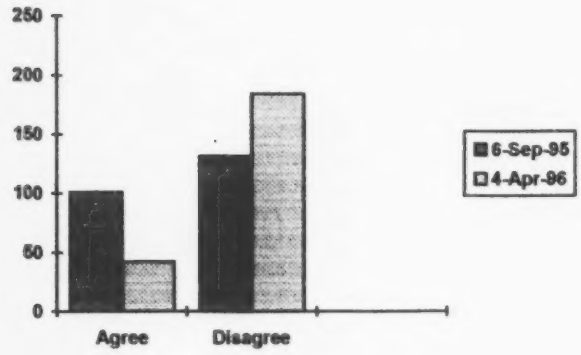

Figure 21

Students Feel Like An Outsider Around Culturally Different Students

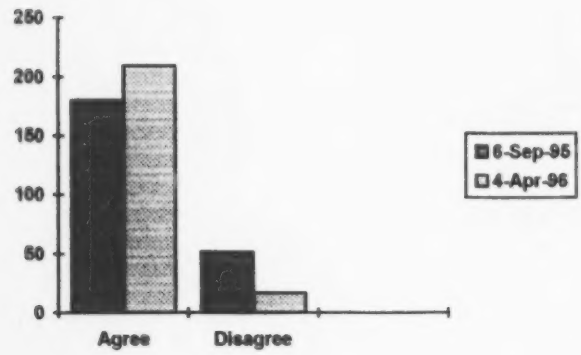

Figure 22

Students Feel It Is Important To Learn About Different Cultures

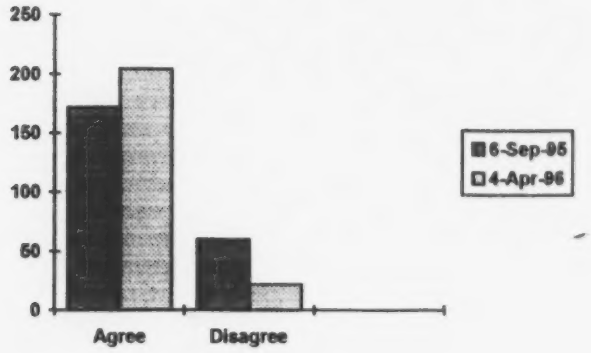

Figure 23

Students Feel They Belong To School

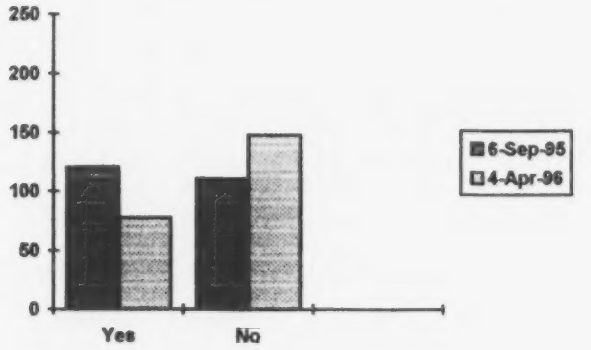

Figure 24

Students Have Seen Discrimination

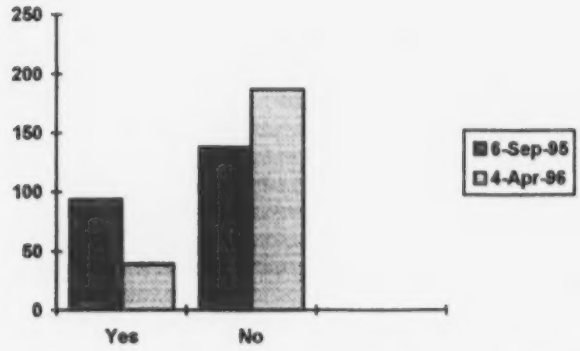

Figure 25

Students Have Felt Discrimination

A total of 158 parents responded to the post implementation survey. An analysis of the data indicates that 93 percent perceived the students as being treated fairly. (Figure 26) There was a ten percent increase in the belief that the target school provides for cultural differences. (Figure 27) Nearly three quarters of the parents stated that they would be willing to participate in future multicultural activities. (Figure 28) Clearly, the implementation of the intervention has had a positive effect on the school climate as noted by the ten percent increase in each of the aforementioned survey statements. Fifty-six percent of the parents indicated the multicultural open house as the number one activity for promoting a positive school climate. The A. O. K. program was recognized as a significant activity by 25 percent of those surveyed. A further investigation revealed that 20 percent of the parents surveyed indicated the multicultural Christmas program advanced the cultural awareness throughout the school. A small percentage mentioned parent conferences and parent night as a positive school unification activity. (Figure 30) It should be noted that 271 students out of 320 attended the multicultural open house. This signifies 85 percent of the total student body in the school activity. It is felt by the

teacher/researchers that the student involvement in the planning, creating and participating in the open house resulted in the dramatic increase in attendance over past years.

Parent Survey

April 4, 1996

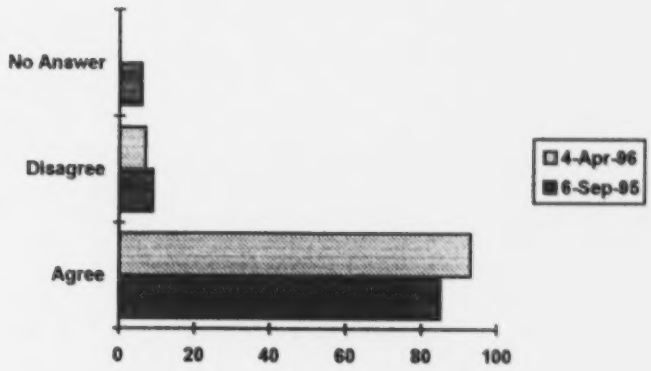

Figure 26

Students Have Been Treated Fairly

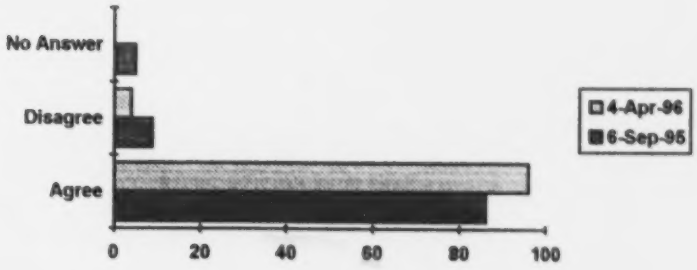

Figure 27

Provides For Cultural Differences

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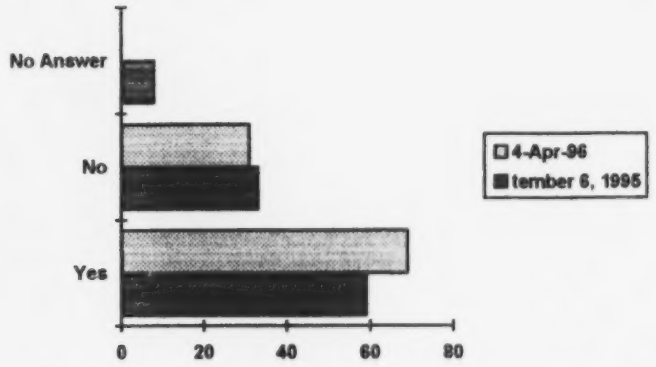

Figure 28

Willing To Participate In Multicultural Activities

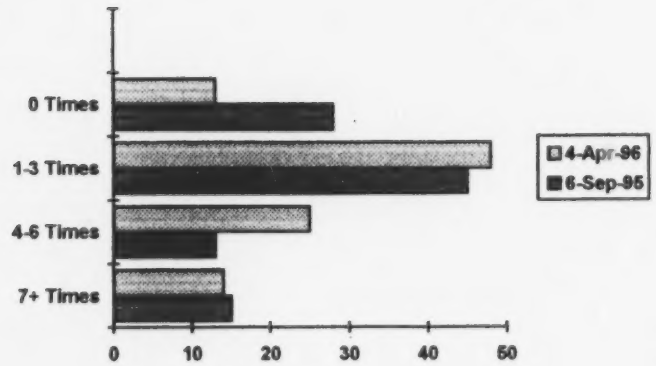

Figure 29

Participated In Child's School Activities

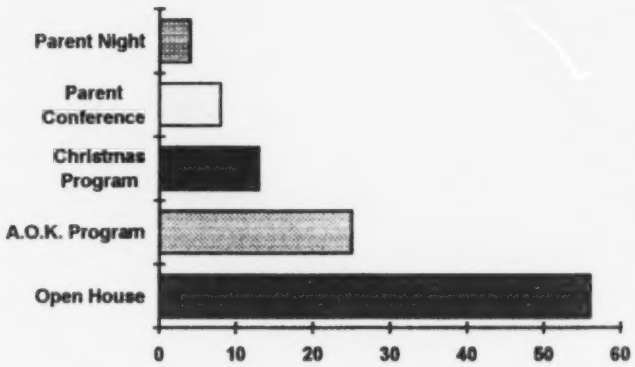

Figure 30

Activities To Unify The School

The assessment disclosed that the students' social skill behaviors consisting of six inch voices, listening, staying seated, and put-ups showed an overall positive gain. The teacher/researchers have identified the social skill infraction of inattentive listening as the most frequently recorded behavior. Twenty-seven percent of the social skill violations consisted of loud/disruptive talking. In review of the data, twenty-two percent of the total infractions occurred in September 1995 as opposed to only 12 percent in March 1996. A key component in this overall gain was the periodic teaching of the social skills throughout the year. By the end of the intervention, students internalized the social skills. The behavior incident which occurred least frequently was the use of put downs. This violation remained consistently low throughout the eight month intervention. There was a dramatic decrease in the number of students out of their seats during cooperative group lessons.

Table 4

Social Skills Observation Checklist

September, 1995 Through March, 1996

Behavior	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total
Disruptive Talking	15	15	10	7	4	6	9	**66**
Inattentive Listening	15	17	11	9	9	11	12	**84**
Out of Seat	18	14	9	6	10	4	5	**66**
"Put-Downs"	6	3	4	4	3	3	3	**26**
Total	**54**	**49**	**34**	**26**	**26**	**24**	**29**	**242**

Additional interpretation of the data in reference to the discipline referrals shows an improvement in student behavior. It is thought that by creating a more caring environment through the Acts of Kindness program students became sensitive to other students feelings. The students were positively reinforced for good behavior by being recognized by their peers and teachers. It is evident by the 621 spots earned on "Leo the Leopard" that the students were practicing random acts of kindness. The A. O. K. program fostered the students ability to get along and created bonds of trust.

Throughout the intervention it was noted that teachers did not witness any cultural conflict between Mexican-American and Whites. By exploring the Mexican-American culture students gained a better understanding of traditions and values of another culture. Students gained respect for each other and found a personal connection with persons of different ethnic backgrounds. It is a realization of the teacher/researchers that children may have kept their conflicts to themselves and not reported them to the teacher in order to avoid being reprimanded. From the evidence provided it can be assumed that the teachers increase in knowledge of the Mexican-American culture stems from the multicultural activities throughout the school year. Due to the new found awareness of

other cultures teachers emphasized a more diverse curriculum. Teachers were willing to investigate customs from other cultures through awareness gained from multicultural literature, multicultural open house activities, and a Spanish-based Christmas program. The positive response of the teachers' willingness to participate in future school activities could be a result of the successful unification projects. There was a camaraderie developed between teachers working towards a single goal to establish good relations between teacher and student and teacher and teacher. Teachers collaborated with one another, sharing ideas, artifacts and suggestions, to address multicultural awareness.

The results of the research signify that students recognize cultural differences. Through cooperative learning activities they developed self esteem, enhanced problem solving, and an acceptance for personal differences. The hands on quilting activity encouraged cooperation among participants and developed the ability to reach group consensus. The teacher/researchers contend that the regular instruction in social skills has helped to elevate the classroom behavior problems. The inclusion of the different ethnic groups in cooperative learning structures reduced cultural conflict within the classroom. The school pledge contributed to the feeling to belonging in the school. It is felt by the teacher/researchers that the students active participation developed a more caring attitude towards the school. The recitation of the pledge promoted a sense of family and oneness throughout the school. It was noticed by the teachers and staff that the children felt special on A.O. K. spirit day because of the comments the children made to the teachers. As evidenced by the teacher/researchers, the overall school climate on spirit days was uplifting. In regards to the students witnessing or experiencing discrimination, it is a conviction of the teacher/researchers that the involvement in the multicultural activities of the intervention decreased all acts of discrimination.

The intervention appears to have had a positive effect on parents' attitudes. The communication lines between home and school were open due to the efforts of the

teacher/researchers to provide all communication in both Spanish and English. By making parents active partners in the multicultural activities throughout the year, a partnership was developed. The end result was a sense of ownership in the school for the parent. The increase in willingness of parent participation can be contributed to the student eagerness to involve the parent. Parents witnessed year long efforts to unify the school and teacher/researchers feel parents want to be more active in their children's lives as proved by the data gathered. As evidenced by the teacher/researchers the positive response to the parent survey could by due to the timely fashion the survey was administered. The survey was sent home the day after the open house when both children and parents were still excited.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the analysis from the data, the following conclusions have been reached. Students demonstrated a marked improvement in behavior. Incidences of inappropiate behavior appears to have been reduced by the interventions. Researchers believe that the school is no longer ethnically divided, due to participation in multicultural activities. The children gained a cultural awareness and an understanding of other ethnic traditions and values.

The intervention appears to have dissipated the negative school climate. Effective parent involvement programs demonstrated commitment to the school community. Researchers feel it is important to make parents, teachers, and students active partners in a multicultural school. Such a collaboration clearly will produce a positive school environment.

Researchers recommend the selected interventions be implemented in an effort to create cultural unity in a Mexican-American and White school Researchers suggest a curriculum that engages students in unity activities that relate to multiculturalism.

Critical to the success of the implementation is the participation and support of all staff members, teachers, and students. It is suggested that the frequency of A. O. K. spirit day be increased to bimonthly participation as opposed to only once a month. Researchers feel whole-school unification activities on spirit days would further promote school morale.

It would be beneficial if all grades were taught social skills once per month thereby hopefully reducing disruptive behavior. It may also be advantageous to make teachers accountable for record keeping of Acts of Kindness spots for "Leo the Leopard". Teachers could turn in a monthly total. Students may benefit from placing their own earned spots on "Leo". An additional suggestion involves student leaders to recite the school pledge within each classroom due to the numerous duties of the principal.

There are some outcomes that can not be measured. The climate of the school has changed to a place where there is laughter through the halls. It is obvious that students have a better relationship with each other and their teachers. Teachers are spending more time with each other, sharing ideas and asking advice. The administrators are urgng us to continue the program next year. Ideas for 1996-1997 open house were discussed immediately following the successful evening.

In a multicultural setting we are all searching for the same thing, acceptance and love. There is no rubric to measure kindness and caring.

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Appendices

Appendix A

DISCIPLINE REFERRAL FORM

	SWEARING	PHYSICAL FIGHTING	DISRESPECT TO AUTHORITY	BUS INFRACTION	TOTAL
KDG					
FIRST GRADE					
SECOND GRADE					
THIRD GRADE					
FOURTH GRADE					
FIFTH GRADE					
SIXTH GRADE					
TOTAL					

Appendix B

TEACHER SURVEY

1. I have noticed cultural conflict between Mexican-Americans and Whites within my classroom.

   Yes_____ No_____

2. Rate yourself on your personal knowledge of the Mexican-American culture. Please circle one.

   1 2 3

   no knowledge little knowledge significant knowledge

3. What have you noticed about the way Mexican-Americans and Whites relate to each other in the classroom, hallways, or the playground?

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Please list types of activities you feel would promote unity at our school.

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. I would be willing to participate in organized activities that create a positive school climate.

   Yes_____ No_____

Appendix C

PARENT SURVEY

1. I feel that in the past, students at school have been treated fairly.

   Agree_____ Disagree_____

2. I feel school provides for cultural (customs and beliefs) differences.

   Agree_____ Disagree_____

3. How often have you participated in your child's school activities in the past year?

   0____ 1-3____ 4-6____ 7+____

4. What activities do you feel would help unify the parents, students, and staff at school?_____

   _____

   _____

5. I would be willing to participate in activities that promote cultural unity, such as bringing people of different cultures together.

   Yes_____ No_____

Please return permission slip and this survey by Sept. 8, 1995. Thank you.

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Appendix D

PARENT SURVEY IN SPANISH

Cuestionario para los padres

1. Creo que hasta ahora, los estudiantos de la escuela han sido tratados justamente.

   Estoy de acuerdo _____ No estoy de acuerdo _____

2. Creo que la escuela . . . provee para las diferencias culturales (Las costumbres y las creencias).

   Estoy de acuerdo _____ No estoy de acuerdo _____

3. ¿Cuantas veces ha participado Ud. en las actividades de la escuela de su hijo(a) en el ano pasado?

   0 ____ 1-3 ____ 4-6____ 7+ _____

4. ¿Cuáles actividades cree Ud. que ayudarían a unificar a los padres, los maestros de la escuela ?

5. Estaré dispuesto a participar en actividades que adelantan la unidad cultural, tal como reunir a personas de diferentes culturas.

   Si _____ No _____

Devuelvan el papel dando permiso y el cuestionario antes del 8 de septiembre, por favor. Gracias.

Appendix E

STUDENT SURVEY

1. Mexican-Americans and Whites at our school get along with each other.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

2. I feel like an outsider when I am with students who are culturally different.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

3. I feel it is important to learn about other cultures.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

4. My school makes me feel like I belong.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

5. I have seen discrimination between Mexican-Americans and Whites at our school.

Yes_____ No_____

If yes, please describe._____

_____

6. I have experienced discrimination between Mexican-Americans and Whites at our school.

Yes_____ No_____

If yes, please describe._____

_____

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Appendix F

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS

DATE:
CLASS:
TEACHER:

WHO	LOUD/ DISRUPTIVE TALKING	INATTENTIVE LISTENING	OUT OF SEAT	PUT-DOWNS

Appendix G

SOCIAL SKILL LESSON PLAN 1

Today I am going to read you a story called, *A Three Hat Day* by Laura Geringer. Listen carefully as I read the story. When I am finished reading, you will divide up into groups by choosing a colored paper hat out of my big cowboy hat. You will find the people that have the same color of hat as you do and form your group. Everyone in your group will have to help solve a problem involving the hats mentioned in the story. Your group will be allowed 30 minutes to figure out how many different ways R.R. Pottle can wear three hats if he wears them in a different position each day. At the end of the 30 minutes, your group will present a chart or drawing showing how you figured out the different hat positions. Make sure that each member of your group understands how to solve the problem because we will have a quiz after the group presentations.

As you work in your groups, I want you to practice the skill of using a 6" voice. I will be walking around and recording the names of those students that are using a 6" voice. Let's review what a 6" voice sounds like.

Do you have any questions about what you are going to be doing or how to use a 6" voice?

I am now going to read the story. Listen and watch the pictures.

You all have done an excellent job of listening to the story. I am going to have you form your groups by choosing a colored hat out of my big hat. Each hat will have a number on it.

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The number ones will be the writers and draw pictures or a chart showing how your team solved the hat problem. Write down what your group says and agrees on. Number twos will be the tellers. They will tell and show how your group sovled the hat problem. Number threes will be the gophers. They will get the chart paper markers and colored tiles quickly and quietly. You may use the tiles to help you figure out the hat positions. Number fours will be the checkers. They will check to see that all group members know how to figure out the hat positions . I will be the time keeper for all groups. I will give you a fifteen minute warning and a five minute warning.

Look around the room and find the big hat on the wall that is the same color as yours. This is where your group will meet. Gophers may go get the materials now and everyone else go to your work area. Time begins now.

Time is up. I would like each group to answer these questions at the bottom of your chart or picture by writing yes or drawing a smiling face. Did all the memers of your group use a 6" voice? Write yes or no. Do all the members of your group understand how to solve the hat problem? Draw a smiling face or a sad face. Now, which group would like to show us how they solved the hat problem first?

Push your desks apart and we will take our quiz. I am going to give you a paper showing R.R. Pottle wearing four different hats. You will draw three different ways he can wear the hats on the paper. Write your name at the top of the paper. Raise your hand when you are finished and I will get your paper.

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Appendix H

SOCIAL SKILL LESSON PLAN 2

Today we will be learning some spider vocabulary words. Let's look at the picture of the big spider. You will see that he is missing all of his eight legs. I have his eight legs and each leg has a "spider word" on it. We are going to go over the pronunciation of each word and I will have good listeners put the legs on the spider as we discuss each word.

Let's review the good listening skills we developed on our T-chart. A good listener will be leaning towards me and keep his/her eyes on me at all times. Show me what a good listener looks like. Good.

Now let's go over the words on the spider legs and discuss what each one means and how to say it. Listen carefully as we discuss the words. When we are finished, you will divide into groups of four. Each person in the group will get two cards with a spider word on each one. Study what each word means. On two blank cards, draw a picture of the spider word and teach it to the other members of your group. At the end of the 30 minute time period, all the members of your group must know All of the eight "spider words". You will then have an oral quiz on what the words mean.

Are there any questions on what you are going to do with the word cards?

You all did a fantastic job of listening as we put the legs on the big spider. Give yourself a big AWESOME.

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As you work in your groups, I want you to use your good listening skills. Remember, turn your body towards the person who is talking and look at the person talking. I will be walking around and writing down the names of good listeners.

I have four different kinds of spider rings in this sack. You will form your groups by choosing a spider ring. After you have your ring, find the picture of the spider that looks like yours hanging on the wall. That is where you will work with your group. The spider rings with the orange spots on their abdomen will be the checkers. They will ask each person in their group what the words mean after they have been taught. The spider rings with the green spots on their abdomen will be the encouragers. They will encourage people by saying, "Keep trying," or "Good job." The spiders with the red spots on their abdomen will be the time keepers. You will allow 10 minutes to draw the pictures and 5 minutes for each person to teach their words. The spider rings with the white spots on their abdomen will be the gophers. They will get the markers for their group and return them at the end of the time.

Go to your work areas and I will give you your cards. Gophers can get the markers .

You have your cards . Begin drawing your word. Time begins now.

Time is up. Go back to your desk and put your cards away. I will choose a spider ring from the sack. I will ask a person with the same kind of ring I choose to define the word. If the person is correct, the rest of the class will show me thumbs up.

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If he is wrong, thumbs down.

You have done an excellent job of learning the "spider words". I noticed when I was walking around that you were also being good listeners. Since you all worked so hard , you may keep the spider ring you have.

I would like you to go back to your group now and decide on two things that really helped each other in this lesson. The gopher for each group will tell us what they decided on. You have five minutes.

Those are all very good ideas. Shake hands with your team members and go to your desks.

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Appendix I

SOCIAL SKILL LESSON PLAN 3

Target Social Skill: Put-Downs

Stage 1 - The Hook: Fill several plastic eggs with slips of paper which have put-downs written on them. Place the eggs in a basket labeled, "Ugly Duckling Put-Down Eggs." Place the basket of eggs beside you and read the story,"The Ugly Duckling," to the class.

Stage 2 - Teach the Skill: Explain to the children that each egg contains a put-down such as, "You're ugly;" You can't do anything right;" or "Who cares what you think." Tell the children that a put-down is something that makes a person feel bad about himself or hurts someones feelings.Ask for two volunteers to come up and model a put-down by cracking open and egg and reading it to the other person. After reading, ask,"How did the put-down make you feel?" Ask the students what they would think or feel if someone said a put-down like this to them. Repeat this procedure several times.

Stage 3- To give the students practice in coming up with alternatives to put-downs, give each pair of students an egg containing a slip of paper with a scenario like the following:

* A classmate asks a question you think is stupid.
* Someone calls you a name.
* A member of your group does a messy job of writing up your report.

On the other side of the paper, have the students write down the peaceable way to handle the situation. Have the students report their remarks to the class.

A good way to practice and observe this social skill is to have a put-down patrol team. Ask patrols to listen for put-downs and watch how they affect people. The patrols should then report their findings on a chart that lists the type of put-down, where it was heard, and the effect it had. They should not record the names of the people involved or profanity.

After a day or two of collecting put-downs in the classroom or on the playground, have a reporter from each patrol summarize what each patrol learned. Ask student if they observed creative ways of responding to put-downs.

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Stage 4 - Use class meetings to help children learn to evaluate and monitor their own progress in eliminating put-downs. If anyone encountered a put-down they didn't know how to handle, brainstorm ideas or solutions.Give each student an egg and a slip of paper to write a put-up on . Place the eggs in the basket and have the children read the put-ups. Discuss how they feel differently getting a put-up instead of a put down.
Divide the students into cooperative groups. Give each group a large paper egg. Ask the students to write down what they have learned about themselves and how they have improved this social skill.Share with the class.

My first grade students were very excited about this lesson. They enjoyed cracking open the eggs. They have learned that words can hurt a person. As one little girl in my class put it," Even if they say they are sorry, it doesn't make it better." They are using more encouraging remarks and finding ways to say what they mean without hurting someones feelings. I feel that the students are becoming more responsible for their behavior.

Stage 5- Recognition and Celebration: Each morning and afternoon was closed with our class cheer, No put-downs (both thumbs pointing to the floor) only put-ups!(arms raised over head with thumbs pointing up.)At the end of the you may want to have a Warm fuzzy Party as we did. The children were given large pieces of paper to draw a warm fuzzy and its message. The posters were hung up in the halls and classroom. They were very proud of their work. The principal came in to give us the Warm Fuzzy Award, which was a fuzzy apple I purchased.

Stage 6- Transfer- I see evidence of our hard work out on the playground.I see students helping those who can't kick a ball and giving them encouragement.I hope it lasts. I also have to say that my class is much more polite than the other first grade, because we have practiced social skills all year.

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Appendix J

SOCIAL SKILL LESSON PLAN 4

Social Skill Lesson

Skill: Staying in seats

Hook: Read, "Miss Nelson is Missing". Half way through the story, the teacher excuses herself and steps into the hall. A peer teacher returns dressed like Viola Swamp. Miss Viloa Swamp continues reading the story.

Model: Upon completion of the story, ask students to volunteer and show the class what staying in their seats looks like. Ask: What if your friend wants you to come over to his desk? What should you do if you need the teacher's help?

Materials: One piece of large writing paper for each group ,chart paper and markers.

Roles: Recorder, gopher, reader and encourager, who encourages the students to remain seated throughout the activity.

Form Groups: Have students work in base groups.

Task: Ask the children to write a group story about a student who would not stay seated at his/her desk. Each student is responsible for contributing at least one sentence to the story. The story must relate how the student changed his/her behavior so that he/she was able to stay seated.

Assessment: The teacher may use a teacher-made check list to note students who did not remain at their desks during the activity.

Processing The Social Skill: To process the social skill,

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assemble the class into a circle. Ask the reader for each group to read the story the group wrote. What did the members of the group do that helped them stay in their seats? Record the childrens' responses on chart paper. Refer to the chart periodically when children are having difficulty remaining in their seats.

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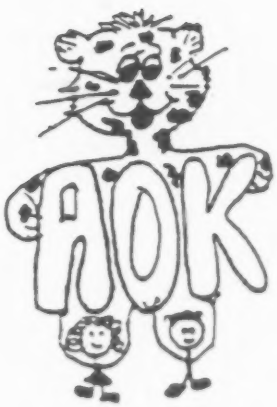
Appendix K

ACTS OF KINDNESS NOMINATION FORM



A.O.K KIDS

ACT OF KINDNESS KIDS

DATE_____ GRADE_____ HOMEROOM TEACHER_____

STUDENT NAME_____ was a caring and kind student

today because_____

_____

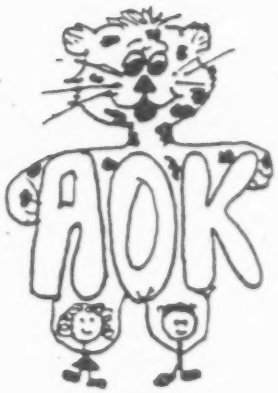
_____

_____

SIGNED_____

Appendix L

ACTS OF KINDNESS CERTIFICATE



IN

RECOGNITION

THIS AWARD HONORS

_____

FOR ACTS OF KINDNESS
A.O.K.

THIS_____DAY OF_____19___

SIGNED_____

Appendix M

PARENT PERMISSION LETTER

August 23, 1995

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to a brand new school year! We are looking forward to an exciting and productive year.

We are presently enrolled in a Masters' degree program. The project we have chosen involves building a positive school climate. Throughout the year we will be observing and doing research on how to create unity within the school. We will be sending home surveys for you to complete, as well as asking for your child's input. The purpose of these surveys is to assist us in finding out the attitudes that exist at our school and how to improve our school climate.

Your participation in these surveys is strictly voluntary and your anonymity is assured. Parent and/or student surveys will not be used to grade you child. All information will be grouped together so specific responses cannot be identified. Should you have any questions about your child's participation in this survey, please feel free to call or visit the school. If you are comfortable with your child's participation, please sign the consent form below and return it to school.

Sincerely,

Dede Herrmann Mariann Berg Debby DePauw

I, the parent/guardian of the minor named below, acknowledge that the project's purposes have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the program and my child's participation can be addressed by contacting the school. I voluntarily consent to my child's participation, and I understand that any information collected during the program will be completely anonymous.

_____
(Name of minor participant)

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian Date

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Appendix N

PARENT PERMISSION LETTER IN SPANISH

5 septiembre, 1995

Estimados padres,

¡Bienvenidos al nuevo año escolar! Anticipamos tener un año muy bueno y productivo.

Este año estamos en un curso de postgraduados en la universidad. El proyecto que escogimos envuelve el estudio de cómo se puede tener un ambiente positivo en la escuela. Através del año vamos a observar y hacer una investigación sobre métodos de crear la unidad dentro de la escuela. Vamos a enviar a casa cuestionarios que quisiéramos que Uds. completen, y también queremos pedirle a su hijo(a) sus opiniones. El propósito de estos cuestionarios es ayudarnos a descubrir las actitudes que existen en la escuela Lincoln y cómo mejorar el ambiente de nuestra escuela.

Su participación en estos cuestionarios es absolutamente voluntaria y anónima. Los cuestionarios no serán usados para determinar calificaciones. Toda la información será agrupada para que no se pueda identificar las respuestas específicas. Si tienen preguntas acerca de la participación de su hijo(a) en este cuestionario, pueden llamar a venir a la escuela para discutirlo. Si están de acuerdo que su hijo(-a) puede participar, firmen la forma para dar permiso y devuélvanla a la escuela, por favor.

Sinceramente,

Dede Herrmann Mariann Titon Debby DePauw

Yo, el padre/la madre/el guardián del chico (de la chica) nombrado abajo, reconozco que los propósitos del proyecto me los han sido explicados y que cualquieras preguntas que yo tenga acerca del programa y la participación de mi hijo (-a), y yo entiendo que cualquier información que sea recogida durante este programa será completamente anónima.

_____
(Nombre de participante de menor edad)

_____ _____
firma de padre/madre/guardián Fecha

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Appendix O

PARENT LETTER - ACTS OF KINDNESS

August 15, 1995

Dear Parents,

This year at our school, we are striving more than ever to create a sense of unity and caring between students, staff members and the community. The program we have developed is entitled "A.O. K. Kids", which stands for Acts of Kindness Kids. It is hoped that through the activities we have planned, the children will develop caring attitudes towards others and gain a better understanding of what citizenship truly is.

The school will have an assembly Friday, August 25th to explain the program to all students. Children can earn spots to put on Leo the Leopard by doing something nice for another student. Students nominate other students for a spot by completing a slip describing the act of kindness.

The children will also be involved in many theme related activities which explore the different cultures of the world. If you have something you would like to share with your child's class concerning your cultural heritage, please contact the school. Let's all work together to make our school one big family!

Sincerely,

, Principal

Appendix P

PARENT LETTER IN SPANISH - ACTS OF KINDNESS

5 septiembre, 1995

Estimados padres:

Este año en la escuela estamos esforzandonos para crear un espiritu de unidad entre los estudiantes, los maestros y la comunidad. El programa que hemos desarrollado se intitula "A.O.K. Kids" que significa Acts of Kindness Kids. Esperamos que através de las actividades que hemos planeado, los estudiantes desarrollarián una actitud positiva hacia otros y adquirir una mejor comprensión de la que significa ser un buen ciudadano.

Tendremos una asamblea el viernes 8 Septembre para explicar el programa a todos los estudiantes. Buenos actos dirigidos a otros(s) estudiante(s) les dara el derecho a poner una marca sobre Leo, el Leopardo, la mascota de la escuela Los estudiantes tambien pueden nombrar a otros explicando el acto de gentileza o ambilidad y así obtener el derecho de poner marcas sobre Leo, el Leopardo.

Los estudiantes llevarán a cabo actividades con temas asociados con diferentes culturas del mundo. Si usted posee algo relacionado con el aspecto cultural de ustedes y desea compartirlo con los alumnos de la clase de su hijo (a), haga el favor de avisar a la escuela. Nuestro primer proyecto de A.O.K. Kids será adornar una camiseta (T-shirt) con el emblema de la escuela. Todos los estudiantes necesitan traer una camiseta blanca a la escuela para el 8 de septiembre. La camiseta no tiene que ser nueva. Trabajemos juntos para convertir a la escuela en una familia grande!

Sinceramente

Director

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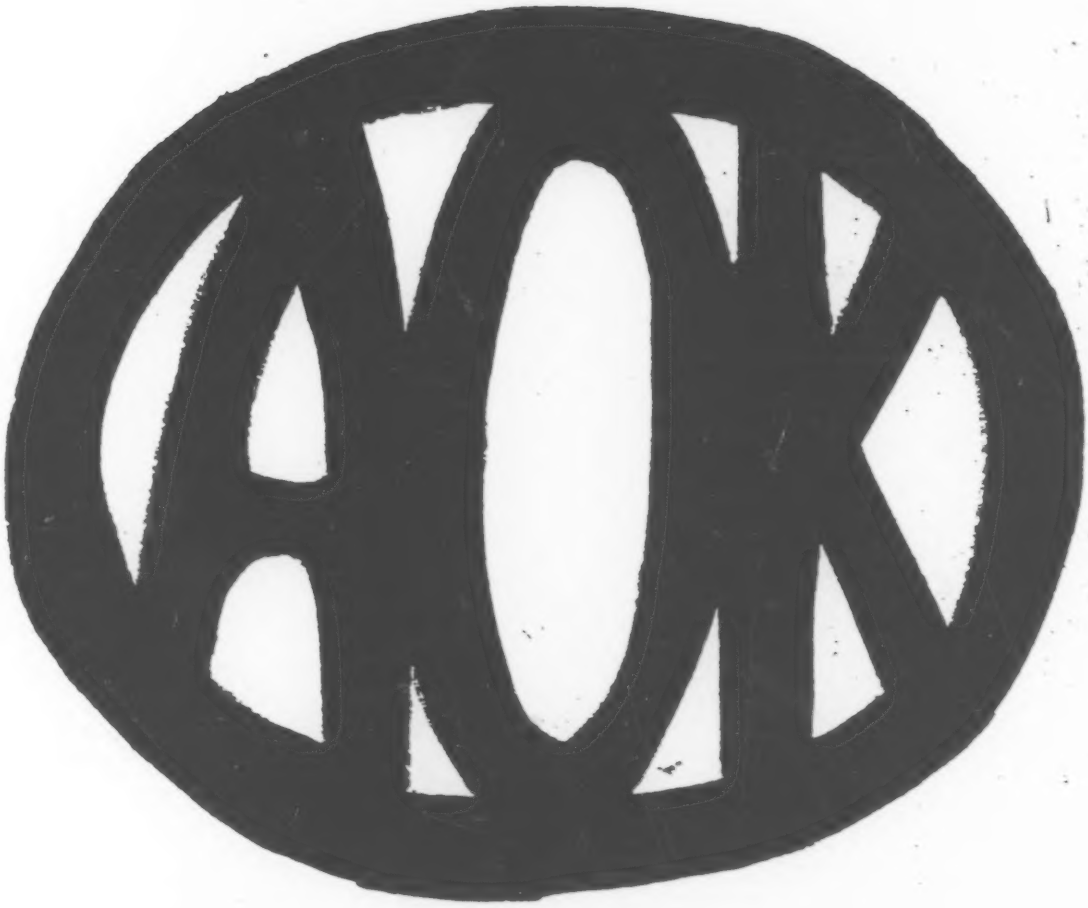
Appendix Q

ACTS OF KINDNESS JOURNAL



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D.J.

The kid helped a old man across the street

87

To kid were running one fell down and the gir
Said are you ok.

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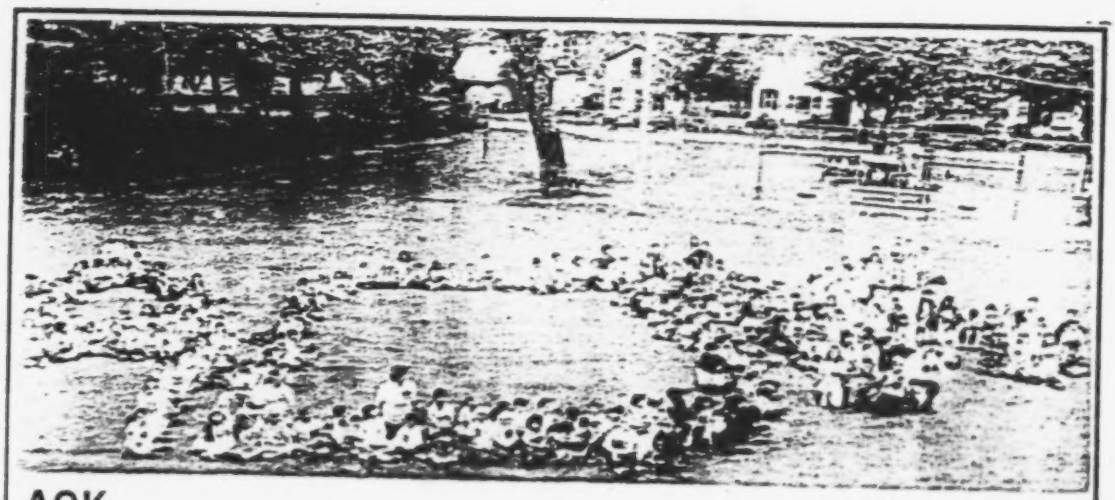
Appendix R

ACTS OF KINDNESS NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH



AOK

PHOTO BY JEFF ROBERTSON

In recognizing School's Acts of Kindness (AOK) program, students spelled out the three letters during spirit day on Friday. Art teacher Bob Donovan and PTO members Erin Brucki and Patti Misciasci helped the students make T-shirts. The program, developed by Debby DePauw, Dede Herrmann and Mariann Tilton, helps promote a positive school climate.

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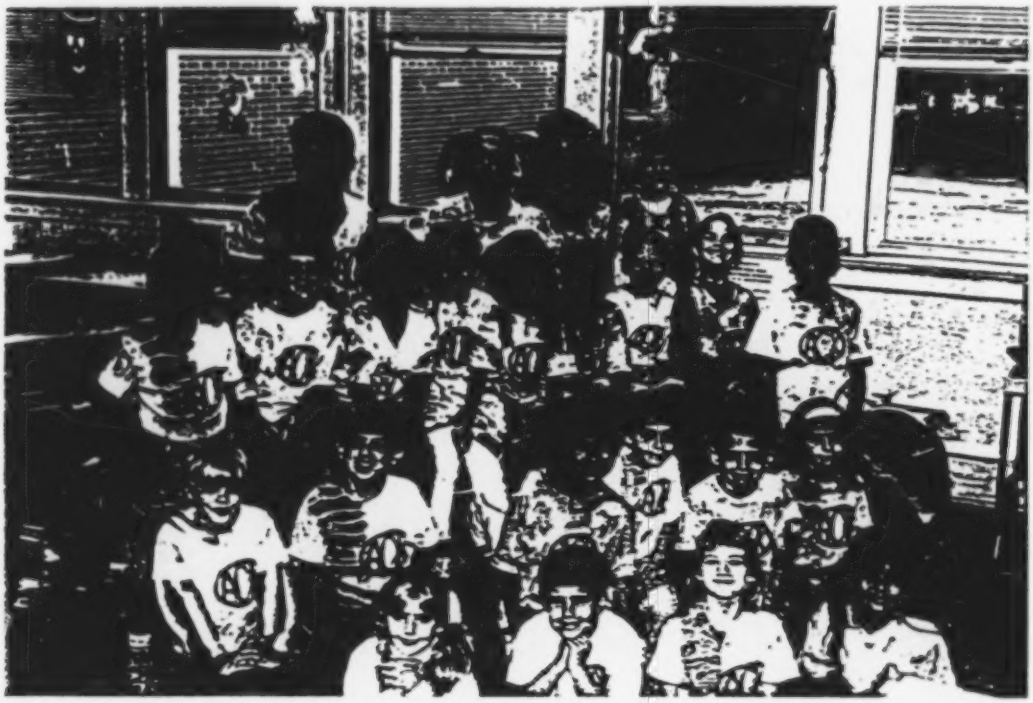
Appendix S

ACTS OF KINDNESS CLASSROOM PHOTOGRAPH



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SCHOOL PLEDGE

School
really neat
a good education
is hard to beat
Keep it clean
and drug free
all these things
for you and me

We're the kind x ness x kids xx
We are A x O x K xx

Help your friends
Show you care
Use good manners
and learn to share
Do your homework
Follow the rules
Help recycle for our school
Help our Leopards
raise the funds
To make our school
better for everyone

We're the Kind x ness x kids xx
We are A x O x K xx

We're the Kind x ness x kids xx
We are A x O x K xx

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Appendix U

ACTS OF KINDNESS QUILT PHOTOGRAPH

PHOTO BY LAURIE WEISSMANN

Kindness quilt

School first-graders pose with the Acts of Kindness quilt. Each class made a patch which depicted a letter and what that meant in the context of doing good deeds. The quilt was displayed during the school open house.

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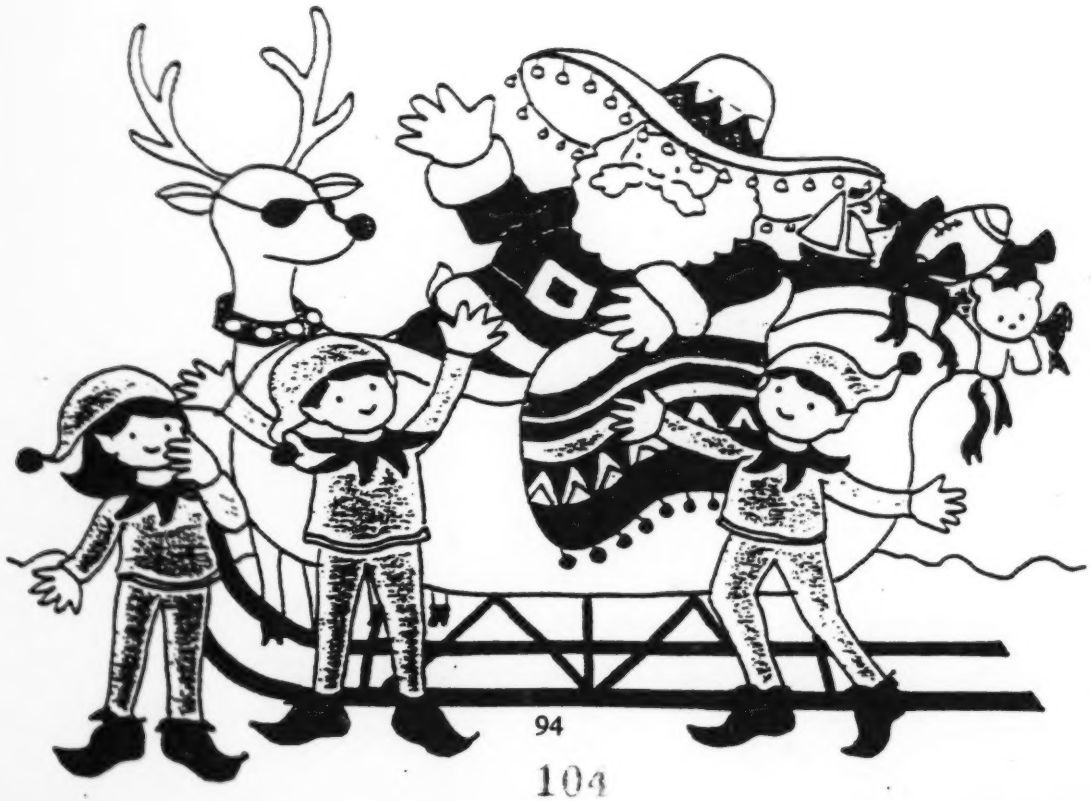
Appendix V

MULTICULTURAL CHIRSTMAS PROGRAM

A Sombrero for Santa



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

DECEMBER 13, 1995

3rd and 4th Grades

A Sombrero For Santa

Musical Selections

A Sombrero for Santa
Gonna Need Shades
Senor Santa
How Do You Say?
Travel Song
We Love Our Jobs
Mexican Farewell
A Sombrero for Santa

CAST

Santa Claus
Mrs. Claus
Mayor
Senorita Bonita
Rudolph
Elf #1
Elf #2
Elf #3
Elf #4
Elf #5
Elf #6
Elf #7
Elf #8
Villager #1
Villager #2
Narrators

Reindeer

Villagers

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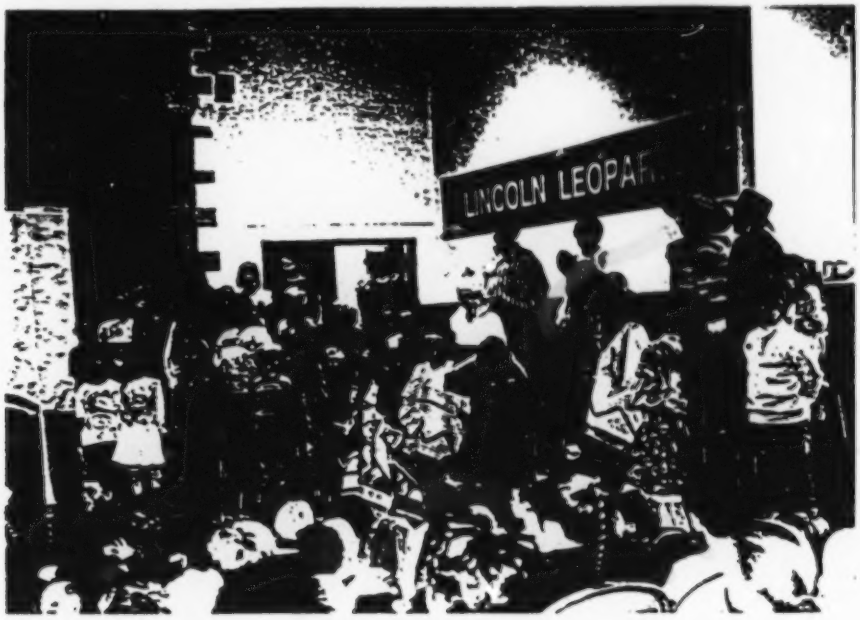
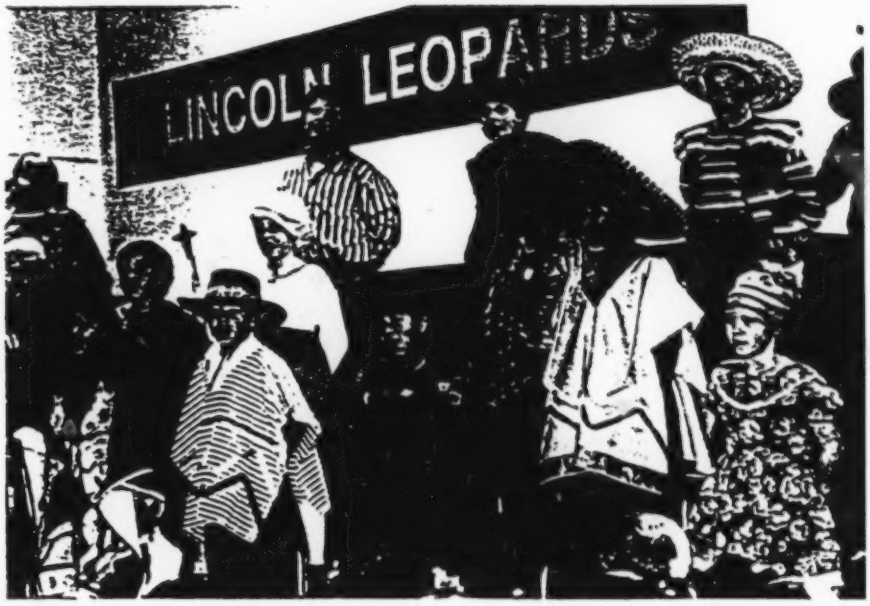
Appendix W

MULTICULTURAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM PHOTOGRAPHS





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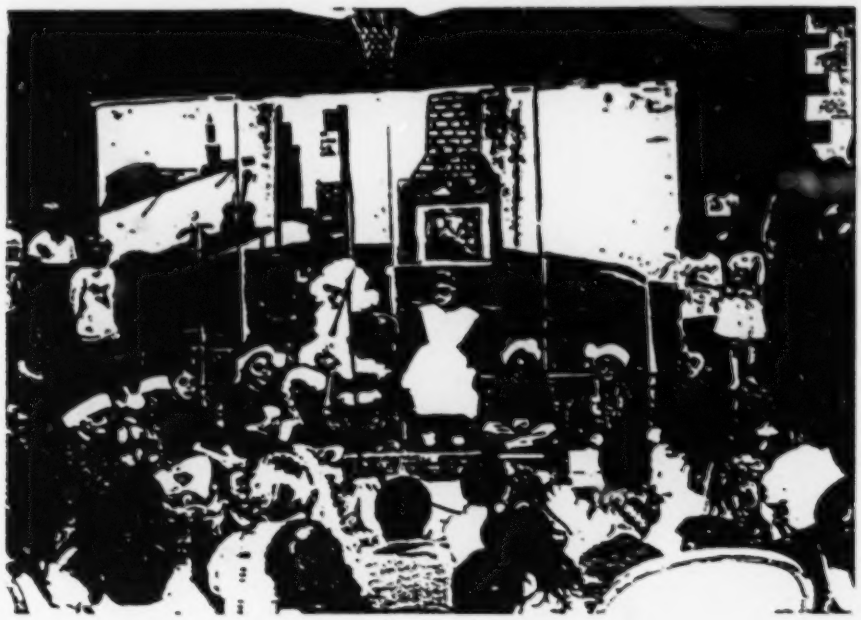

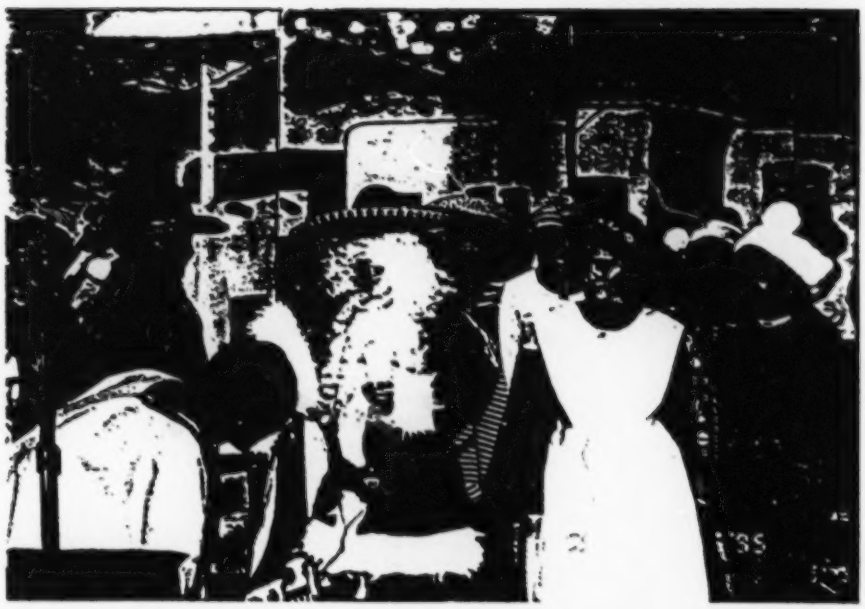

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Appendix X

Multicultural Literature Lesson

Literature: " Too Many Tamales" by Gary Soto

Lesson: Lure your students down Mexico way. This lesson includes suggestions for writing, language development, math, cooking, social studies and art. Begin the lesson by reading "Too Many Tamales".Enrich the students cultural experience by doing any or all of the activities.

Creative Writing: Maria tried to solve the problem of the lost ring by herself. Discuss ways that Maria's situation could have been handled. Invite the students to write about predicaments or problematic situations they have experienced. How did they solve their problem?

Language: Invite Mexican-American children to share their language. Have "student teachers" teach simple Spanish phrases. Let it be their time to shine.

Math: Teach the numerals one through ten in Spanish. In the interest of cultural awarness, introduce students to some Spanish food. Cooking is a good way to teach measurement. There are many recipes for tamales. Authentic tamales use corn husks to seal in the filling. Invite Mexican-American parents to share their expertise in cooking by helping the children prepare the tamales, as they can be difficult for a first time cook.

Social Studies: Locate Mexico on the map.Name the capital. Color a map of Mexico. Make a Venn diagram comparing your state flag to the flag of Mexico. Using a piece of 12" x 18" white paper, create and color the flag of Mexico.

Art: Serapes are a customary Mexican costume. A serape rasembles a Mexican blanket worn over the shoulders for boys or draped over the shoulders as a shawl for girls. The children can make serapes by using markers to color long sections of heavy paper towels. Tape the perforations on the backside.

Music: Maracas can be made from plastic film ~~canisters~~. Cut a small slit in the lid. Fill the canister with popcorn kernals about one fourth full. Glue the top to the container. Insert a popcicle stick into the slit for a handle. Make Music!

To culminate the study of Mexico, have the students plan a fiesta. Play recordings of mariachi music and serve student-made Mexican foods. Invite the music teacher to teach "The Mexican Hat Dance".

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Appendix Y

OPEN HOUSE PARENT LETTER

March 13, 1996

Dear Parents,

You and your children are cordially invited to attend School's Open House on Thursday, March 28, from 6:30 - 8:00 PM.

This year we're featuring a multicultural theme where all students and guests will have the opportunity to travel around the world by visiting classrooms that are featuring a country. Listed below are the steps that our visitors must take in order to make this exciting theme come alive:

1.) When arriving at school the students will go to our gym and receive their passports at the customs booth.
2.) They will then leave the gym and begin their trip around the world. You may visit the countries/classrooms in any order.
3.) For each country that is visited the students will receive a stamp in their passport book. (Be prepared to answer questions about the country you're visiting before getting your passport stamped.)
4.) After the students have visited all of the countries, they must go back to the gym to enter the U.S.A. If all countries are stamped they will receive a special prize!

In conjunction with our Open House, the School P.T.O. will be sponsoring a free Ice Cream Social from 6:30 - 8:00 PM in our cafeteria. They will also be giving out prizes and selling Leopard-wear.

However, in order to make this Ice Cream Social an even bigger success, our P.T.O. needs your help in providing some baked goods. If you can donate a dozen cupcakes or cookies, please fill out the bottom part of this sheet and return it to the School office by Friday, March 22. The items you make may be dropped off in our school cafeteria anytime during the afternoon or early evening on March 28.

PLEASE BE SURE ALL STUDENTS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.

Sincerely,

Hope to see you there!

Principal

YES, I WILL SEND _____ CUPCAKES _____ COOKIES

NAME_____

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Appendix Z

OPEN HOUSE PARENT LETTER IN SPANISH

Marzo 18, 1996

Estimados padres,

Uds. y sus hijos están cordialmente invitados al programa de escuela Lincoln el jueves, 28 de marzo, de 6:30 - 8:00 de la noche.

Este año el tema es multicultural. Todos los alumnos e invitados tendrán la oportunidad de viajar por todo el mundo visitando los salones de clase que tendrán el tema de un país. En la lista abajo pueden ver los pasos que nuestros invitados tendrán que seguir para que este tema sea un éxito. Son:

1) Cuando lleguen a la escuela, los estudiantes irán al gimnasio a recibir sus pasaportes en la casilla aduanal.
2) Saldrán del gimnasio e iniciarán su viaje alrededor del mundo. Uds. pueden visitar los países (en cada salón) en cualquier orden.
3) Por cada país que visiten los estudiantes, ellos recibirán un sello en su pasaporte. Prepárense Uds. a contestar preguntas acerca del pais que Ud. esta visitando antes de recibir su sello.
4) Después de que los estudiantes hayan visitado todos los países, deben regresar al gimnasio para entrar a los Estados Unidos. Si ellos tienen un sello de todos los países, ellos recibirán un premio especial.

Durante el programa la Asociación de Padres y Maestros de la escuela Lincoln patrocinarán nieve gratis de 6:30 - 8:00 en la cafetería. También estarán dando premios y venderán ropa con el tema leopardo Lincoln.

Sin embargo, para tener éxito en esta hora social, la Asociación de Padres y Maestros necesita que Uds. provean galletas o pastelitos. Si Uds. pueden donar una docena de pastelitos o galletas, completen la parte de abajo de esta hoja y devuélvanla a la oficina de la escuela Lincoln el viernes, 22 de Mayo. Los artículos que donen pueden ser entregados en la cafetería del la escuela a cualquier hora durante la tarde el 28 de marzo.

Favor de estar seguros de que todos los estudiantes esten acompañados por un adulto.

¡ Esperamos verlos esa noche!

Sinceramente,

Kent Sabin, Director

Sí, mandaré _____ pastelitos _____ galletas

Nombre _____

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Appendix AA

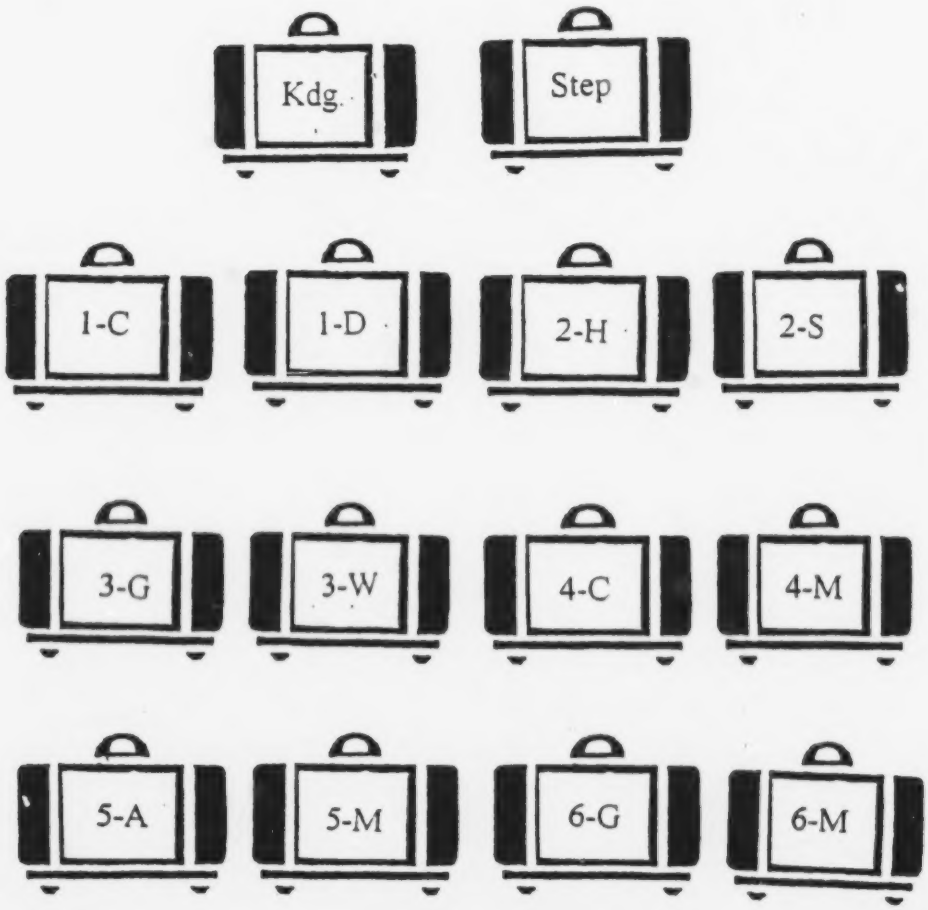
PASSPORT SAMPLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NAME: Darlene Diaz

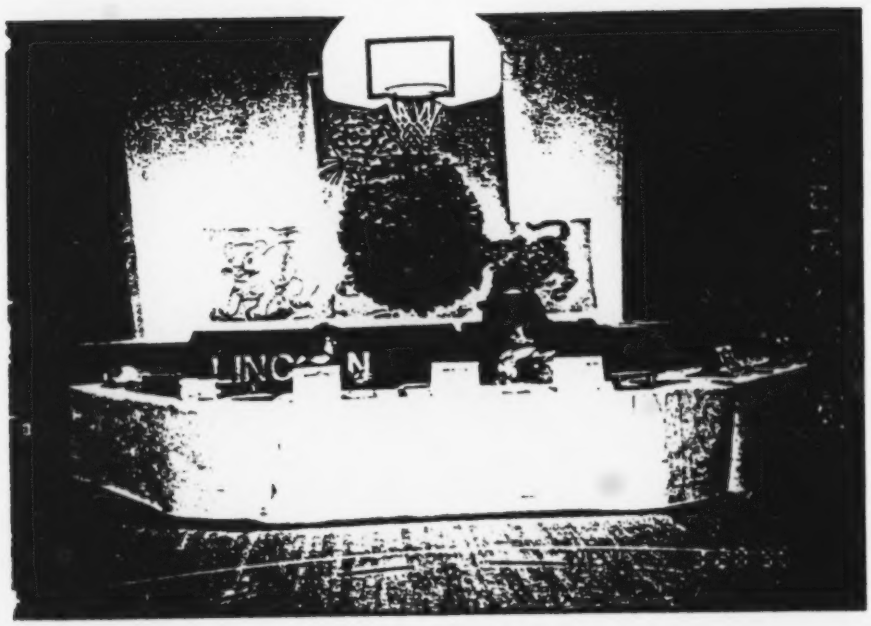
DATE OF ISSUE: 3-28-96

SIGNATURE OF BEARER_____



Appendix B B

OPEN HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHS



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Appendix CC

TEACHER SURVEY

1. I have noticed cultural conflict between Mexican-Americans and Whites within my classroom, in the 1995-1996 school year.

   Yes_____ No_____

2. Rate yourself on your personal knowledge of the Mexican-American culture. Please circle one.

   1 2 3

   no knowledge little knowledge significant knowledge

3. What have you noticed about the way Mexican-Americans and Whites relate to each other in the classroom, hallways, or the playground, in the 1995-1996 school year?

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Which of activities during the 1995-1996 school year, do you feel promoted unity at our school?

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. I would be willing to participate in organized activities that create a positive school climate, in the 1996-1997 school year.

   Yes_____ No_____

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Appendix DD

STUDENT SURVEY

1. Mexican-Americans and Whites at our school get along with each other.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

2. I feel like an outsider when I am with students who are culturally different.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

3. I feel it is important to learn about other cultures.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

4. My school makes me feel like I belong.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

5. I have seen discrimination between Mexican-Americans and Whites at our school.

Yes_____ No_____

If yes, please describe._____

_____

6. I have experienced discrimination between Mexican-Americans and Whites at our school.

Yes_____ No_____

If yes, please describe._____

_____

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Appendix EE

PARENT SURVEY

1. I feel that in the past, students at our school have been treated fairly.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

2. I feel our school provides for cultural (customs and beliefs) differences.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

3. How often did you participate in your child's school activities in the 1995-1996 school year?

0____ 1-3____ 4-6____ 7+____

4. What activities during the 1995-1996 school year do you feel helped unify the parents, students, and staff, at our school?_____

_____

_____

5. I would be willing to participate in activities that promote cultural unity in the 1996-1997 school year.

Yes_____ No_____

Please return this survey by Thursday, April 4, 1996. Thank you.

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Appendix FF

PARENT SURVEY IN SPANISH

CUESTIONARIO PARA LOS PADRES

1. Creo que hasta ahora, los estudiantes de nuestra escuela han sido tratdos justamente.

   Estoy de acuerdo_____ No estoy de acuerdo_____

2. Creo que nuestra escuela provee para las diferencias culturales (Las costumbres y las creencias).

   Estoy de acuerdo_____ No estoy de acuerdo_____

3. Cuantas veces ha participado Ud. en las actividades de la escuela de su hijo(a) en el ano escolar 1995-1996?

   0_____ 1-3_____ 4-6_____ 7+_____

4. Cuales actividades durante el ano 1995-1996 cree Ud. que ayudaron a unificar a los e studiantes, y los maestros de nuestra escuela?_____

   _____

   _____

5. Estare dispuesto a participar en actividades que adelantan la unidad cultural, en al ano escolar 1996-1997.

   Si_____ No_____

Devuelvan el papel dando permiso y el cuestionario antes del 4 de abril, 1996, por favor. Gracias.

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